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FLORIDA

SENATOR CLAUDE PEPPER
Darling of the Ultra-Left

by Fred Rodell
Page 389

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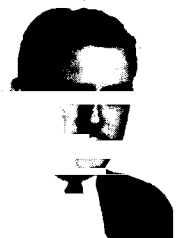
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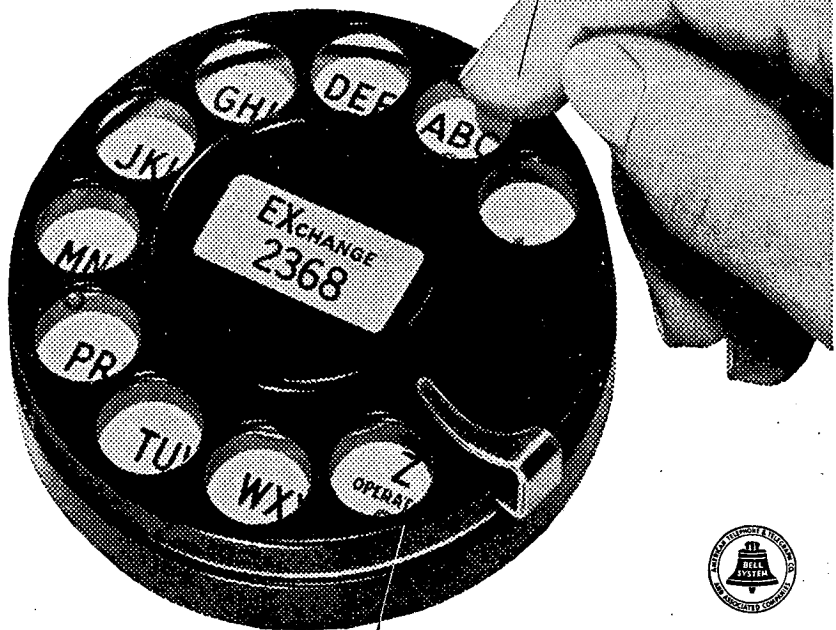
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The American MERCURY

SENATOR CLAUDE PEPPER

BY FRED RODELL

NOT so many years ago, it was a conspicuous waste of the time of the U. S. Senate to call the name of Senator Pepper when a roll-call got down to the P's. Everyone knew that Senator Pepper, no matter what the issue, would vote the straight, conservative Republican way. He was a stalwart of stalwarts, a GOP wheel horse, and his name was George Wharton Pepper of Pennsylvania.

Today's Senator Pepper is a wheel horse of a very different color. That color may vary from pale pink to bright red but it is usually well on the left side of the political spectrum. And the man who goes grimly forth to battle, every other day, under these fluctuating hues is one Claude Denson Pepper of Florida — the current darling of the ultra-left-wing press, although his Senate record includes sup-

port of the anti-labor Smith-Connally Act and bitter opposition to the Federal anti-lynching bill — the fellow who made a pilgrimage to the Kremlin for a cozy, confidential chat with Comrade Stalin barely a year after he had campaigned for Senate re-election on a platform that included "white supremacy" for the South — the missionary on the make, who has always tempered his liberal evangelism to the exigencies of the mundane political moment and who nevertheless hopes, perhaps by 1948, to supplant Henry Wallace as the leader of the American Left.

Claude Pepper has come to the fore fast. He was so nearly unknown in 1938 that the *New Republic*, for which he has since doubled as idol and contributor, ran a long article commenting on the re-election of "Senator

FRED RODELL, a frequent contributor to THE AMERICAN MERCURY, is professor of law at Yale University, a contributing editor of the *Progressive* and a former editor of *Fortune*.

George F. Pepper of Florida" — an error which could no more slip by that weekly's adulatory editors today than could a reference to FDR as Theodore Q. Roosevelt. Indeed, that same 1938 article patly summarized Senator Pepper's career, for two years past and seven years to come, when it cracked: "His utterances in the Senate . . . are for the most part simply the voice of Hyde Park in the drawling accents of northwest Florida." For Claude Pepper did not rise to prominence — and to having his name printed properly in the press — under the steam of his own original ideas and achievements; more than any other man high in public life, he rode there on the intellectual coat tails of Franklin Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

Other liberal lights of the New Deal Senate — men like Norris and Black and La Follette and Wagner — had written their names large in the pages of progressive government before ever there was a New Deal; not Pepper, who came in after the New Deal dinner was cooked and sat down at the New Deal table. Other liberal senators continued, throughout the Roosevelt régime, to work out important legislation on their own and to conduct important investigations; not Pepper. What Pepper did — and did interminably — was talk. He loaded the Congressional Record and the press with words that may have been his own, although the thoughts behind them usually came canned straight from Administration head-

quarters. Said the New York *Herald Tribune* in 1940: "It has long been suspected that when the White House has an important balloon to send up it invites Senator Pepper to supply the necessary oratorical helium for the ascension."

THOUGH Pepper could be counted on as a New Deal mouthpiece for most domestic measures, his flaunted liberalism seemed suddenly to fade whenever a measure cut too close to home — and to the future votes of the Florida electorate. So it was with the anti-lynching bill which he branded "pernicious" (this was shortly before he ran for re-election in '38) and with the union-slapping Smith-Connally Act which he backed (this was shortly before he ran for re-election in '44). More recently, he refused to support the Fair Employment Practices Commission (a threat, no doubt, to "white supremacy"); and despite his chairmanship of a Senate subcommittee on wartime health and education, he weaseled on the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill for medical care with the revealing comment that he would support it *if* it were "generally accepted by the American people."

But on the Roosevelt international policy, from start to finish, Pepper had no such qualms. From the day in May 1940, when he first rose on the Senate floor to demand all aid voted of war to the Allies (he was voted down, twelve to one, in committee), he was recognized as FDR's personal Senate spokesman on foreign affairs.

He spoke for the destroyers-for-bases deal, for peacetime conscription, almost for war. Characteristic, in style and sentiment, was one peroration:

Now we can turn the scale of battle by goods and by money and by airplanes, and perhaps even more — by a straightforward manly declaration that we have enough self-respect and enough affection for the institutions of democracy to tell Hitler and Hitlerism that we are his eternal and mortal enemy, and that every item of our strength and every bit of our courage and all of our resources we dedicate to the honorable cause of his destruction as the arch foe of decent men.

These were brave words — but not quite so brave, coming from the gentleman from Florida, as had they come, say, from a Midwestern Senator. For Florida, like most of the South, was hot for intervention long before the rest of the nation — and it would have taken far more courage to quit playing up to the Negro-haters on the home front than even to come out flatly for a declaration of war.

FROM Pearl Harbor on, right through the Dumbarton Oaks and Bretton Woods agreements, Claude Pepper continued as the voice of the White House on international matters. He sponsored for the President a constitutional amendment to get rid of the two-thirds rule for Senate ratification of treaties, when it looked as though United States participation in the proposed United Nations might run afoul of the rule. In fact, Claude Pepper's whole reputation as a liberal stems largely and lopsidedly from his 1940-

45 record as a straight-down-the-line Rooseveltian interventionist and internationalist.

Then Roosevelt died, and the man who had been his talking marionette in the Senate suddenly found himself with nobody there to pull the strings or provide the words. Truman, it was clear, was not going to take over Pepper as a sound-box. And Pepper, with no boss, no strong man to use and guide him, for a while seemed lost. But not for long.

On September 14 of last year, Senator Pepper had an hour's audience with Generalissimo Stalin. Ever since, it has looked suspiciously as though the Senator had found a new boss to idolize, a new strong man to pull the strings that FDR left dangling. By his own account of his talk with "the single most powerful man in the world, the man who is going to determine in a large way what kind of world ours is to be," Pepper seems to have taken Stalin's every word as gospel truth. Especially when "Stalin told me Russia does not want to waste her substance on war or preparation for war, and she is not thinking of aggression upon the nations of the world."

And for the past year, there has been in the United States no more ardent champion of Soviet foreign policy than Senator Pepper. He has bitterly, and often properly, blasted British imperialist moves; he has constantly carped, and with plenty of reason, at the stupidities and the arrogance of United States policy.

But in both cases his strongest criticism seems always to be aimed at actions that counter Soviet interests or step on Russian toes. Whereas for Russia itself, with its bald if allegedly protective expansionism and its utter contempt for civil liberties and the kind of political democracy we know, Pepper has had nothing but apologies or praise. The ideas he has expressed on every important international issue — from Iran to Spain, from the UN to the atom bomb — have coincided almost as closely with Stalin's views as they once coincided with the views of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

This rash of Russophilia has, of course, not hurt Pepper in the eyes of the United States totalitarian Left. It has helped to put him almost on a par with Henry Wallace as their number one political pin-up boy. Possibly Pepper hopes thus to make a play for the vice-presidential nomination in 1948; possibly his sights are set higher; he has always been ambitious. But there was a time when his ambition looked no farther than a United States senatorship.

II

BACK in 1911, at Camp Hill, Alabama, a homely, runty, black-haired youngster solemnly cut into the bark of a tree the words CLAUDE PEPPER, UNITED STATES SENATOR. He was then only ten years old, having been born in the fall of 1900, on a farm near Dudleyville, Alabama. A poor boy, grim to make good, he left

the farm after he got through public school and went to work briefly, first as a schoolteacher, then in a steel mill, to earn his first term's tuition at the University of Alabama. A typical college-boy job, working in a dining hall, carried him the rest of the way, and he graduated, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1921. Undeviating in his ambition and unreticent about it, his college nickname was "Senator."

Three years at the Harvard Law School added an LL.B. to his name and a bit of polish to his burgeoning oratorical style; a year of teaching at the University of Arkansas clearly got him nowhere toward the achievement of his political goal; so he picked his state and went into the practice of law — from which most politicians spring — in Perry, Florida. Within three years he was named a member of the state Democratic committee and the following year, 1929, he was elected to the Florida legislature. His term completed, he decided to stay close to the political goings-on of the capital and moved his law practice to Tallahassee. There, he handled a couple of minor part-time jobs in the state government, while building up a reputation as a quick, blunt, often ruthless courtroom lawyer.

By 1934, just ten years out of law school, he felt ready for the big plunge. The politicians now knew him well; his campaign speeches, ever since he stumped for Al Smith in 1928, had kept his name and his face before the electorate. He announced for the Democratic primary for United

States Senator — and lost, but by less than five thousand votes. Disappointment, however, was shortlived, for in 1936 Senator Fletcher died and Pepper found himself unopposed in seeking election for the remainder of Fletcher's term. With his brand-new bride, the former Irene Mildred Webster, and the air of a crusader, CLAUDE PEPPER, UNITED STATES SENATOR, went up to Washington.

DURING his first two years in the Senate, about all that Pepper did was to ride faithfully and comfortably on the New Deal legislative bandwagon — except when he joined vociferously with other, less pretentiously liberal, Southern colleagues in the filibuster against the Federal anti-lynching bill. (Pepper's friends often match against this his sponsorship, some years later, of a Federal anti-poll-tax bill, conveniently forgetting that Pepper did not sponsor his bill until long after Florida had repealed its own state poll tax.) Both the New Dealing and the filibustering, no matter how motivated, were, at the least, equally effective toward a certain end: Florida, full of poor whites who could vote, was a New Deal state and a Negro-knocking state — and Senator Pepper, in 1938, would be up for reelection to a full six-year term.

He played his campaign straight for the poor-white vote. Opposed in the primary by two real rivals and two nobodies, Pepper talked for wage-and-hour legislation, touted the WPA, and topped it all off with a promise to

support the screwball Townsend Plan for old-age assistance, even if the President should veto it. This last bit of localized vote-catching obviously did not bother the President, for son James, then vacationing in Palm Beach, announced to the press: "Senator Pepper has been loyal to the Administration and has worked hard for his state, and it is our sincere hope that he will be returned to the Senate." To which one of Pepper's rivals retorted: "The state of Florida is waiting with bated breath to see what stand Sistie and Buzzie will take." Toward the campaign's end, the same rival accused the WPA of padding its Florida rolls for Pepper and promised, if elected, to clean up Federal relief — thus clinching for Pepper the votes of some 33,000 WPA workers, along with their families and friends. These plus the Townsend hopefuls plus the rest of the state's poor and poorish whites returned Pepper to the Senate with a three-to-two majority over his combined opponents.

Because nothing makes duller reading than words about words, it is difficult to write of Pepper's next six Senate years. Future biographers will find not only the Congressional Record but many magazines of opinion and countless columns on the inside pages of the *New York Times* padded with the words that Pepper spoke, or sometimes wrote, either in defense or in trial-balloon advance of Franklin Roosevelt's policies — especially his foreign policies. Fellow senators — whose important work is always done

in committee rooms and offices and corridors, not on the publicity-catching Senate floor — would sigh and sometimes leave the chamber as the dark, stocky, long-nosed Floridian rose to deliver another of his more earnest than eloquent exhortations in a vehement voice that whined at the edges. But Senator Pepper talked on and on.

ONLY two non-talking incidents warrant mention. One was a glimpse of Hitler, in the course of a trip to Europe, which glimpse, it has been absurdly said on Pepper's own authority, "gave birth in him to undying hatred of Nazism" — as though so allegedly deep an emotion could be so casually born. The other incident occurred in the summer of 1940 when a group of women, opposed to the peacetime draft and self-labeled the "Mothers of the United States of America" and the "Congress of American Mothers," strung up a coconut-headed dummy of "Claude (Benedict Arnold) Pepper" on a tree on Capitol Hill. Pepper's original and magnanimous comment was: "These women, like all other Americans, are sincere in their patriotism . . . their hanging me in effigy is a splendid demonstration of what we all desire — freedom of speech and freedom of action." But a day later, repenting his generosity, he was soberly warning the Senate: "Sometimes we do not know when we are being made the instruments of sinister forces, designed to accomplish not good but evil."

By 1944, when Pepper came up for

election again, his militantly pro-war record was in his favor, even with Florida reactionaries. But the war was no longer a major political issue and FDR's New Deal still was. Pepper stuck to the OPA and other New Deal symbols while Roosevelt-haters, centering in Palm Beach, denounced him as a "socialist" and threw four conservative Democrats into the primary against him, in the hope of forcing a run-off election. Then someone dug up a picture of Pepper addressing a Negro meeting in Los Angeles (three thousand miles away from Florida). Pepper countered by viciously attacking a recent United States Supreme Court decision that declared the "white primary" in Texas unconstitutional. "The South," proclaimed Senator Pepper, "will allow nothing to impair white supremacy."

He was re-elected.

III

IN FOR six more years, Pepper continued to strum whatever tune the White House called. He talked for confirmation of Henry Wallace, not only as Commerce Secretary but also, and futilely, as Federal loan administrator; and he then said of the man whose leadership of the ultra-Left he now seems to covet: "Henry Wallace, second only to Mr. Roosevelt, symbolizes democracy in America and the world." There were minor variations, as when Pepper protested a few of FDR's last batch of high State Department appointees. But he was

Roosevelt's man until Roosevelt's death.

He has never been Truman's man. Quiet for quite a while after his master's voice was stilled, he joined, in the summer of 1945, a group of sixteen senators who were "uncertain" about Truman and who hoped to meet regularly as a liberal planning-and-pressure bloc in the Senate. But two weeks later Pepper was off for Europe and the session with Stalin that sold him completely on Soviet benevolence — and on Stalin.

Since his return, he has seemed to have but two strings to his harp. True, he has chairmanned a couple of Senate subcommittees and has lent his name to bills for a National Science Foundation, for a National Neuropsychiatric Institute, and for a Maternal and Child Welfare Act (for which he received an award from *Baby Talk Magazine*). But his major energies and noises have been devoted, first, to an almost anti-American championship of Soviet Russia and, second, to a slightly correlative crusade in behalf of labor unions.

This crusade, more negative than affirmative in its effort to block anti-labor legislation and retain Rooseveltian labor reforms, has blotted out, in the minds of most unioners, Pepper's onetime treachery to labor's cause and to his own liberal professions in voting for the Smith-Connally Act. The crusade reached its high point in Pepper's most courageous and constructive action during his ten years in the Senate. That was

when President Truman hysterically asked, at the conclusion of the railroad strike, for permission to draft into the Army recalcitrant strikers in government-seized industries — and the House hysterically responded Aye. Pepper, called to a roving microphone for comment immediately after Truman stopped speaking, was cut off the air in the middle of a sentence as he started to express his indignant opposition. And it was Pepper, along with a strange bedfellow, Senator Taft, who stymied Senate action until anger-heated minds cooled down and the preposterous proposal was overwhelmingly defeated.

FOR Senator Pepper is by no means a malicious figure or a bad public servant. His Senate voting record, assayed from a progressive point of view, is heavily weighted on the side of the angels. But Pepper is essentially a weak man, a talker rather than a doer, a follower rather than a self-starter, a man of more bravado than genuine courage and of more stubbornness than genuine integrity. Humorous, heavy, a self-appointed apostle of Great Causes who is yet ready to compromise those Causes for the sake of self-advancement, he is the precise type of personality whom liberals would abhor if he happened to be a conservative.

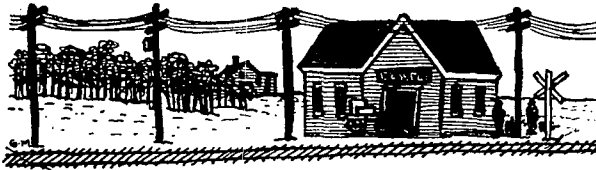
Moreover, Senator Pepper's species of liberalism, despite his own typically American rise from poverty to prominence, has never quite seemed to have its roots firmly bedded in native soil.

By and large, he has faithfully supported measures to better the lot of the lower income groups — who happen to make up the majority of voters. But he has often showed a strange lack of concern for the protection of those rights of individuals and minorities that we call civil liberties and that are at the very heart of the American tradition and ideal of liberalism.

Thus, a seven-point prewar program he proposed in the summer of 1940 would have conferred on the President powers even more drastically dictatorial than those Congress granted the President after the nation was actually at war. Thus, too, Pepper enthusiastically applauded that travesty of United States-style justice that are the Nuremberg trials, even to the extent of encouraging the suggested mid-trial substitution of one defendant for another. And thus, of course, Pepper's present position on foreign affairs can be seen as cut out of the same cloth as his political position at home. For his abject admiration of the Soviet régime, embodying

an apathetic acceptance of that régime's suppression of individual and minority rights and freedoms, is of an ideological piece with his unconcern for the Negro, his opposition to the FEPC, his prating of "white supremacy" in the South.

IT is because his brand of liberalism smells too much of *dictated* blessings for the masses, and has far too little of the flavor of the Bill of Rights and the dignity of human beings, that Pepper's career has probably reached its zenith. Though the United States electorate makes mistakes, it is usually quick to tell the synthetic or imported from the genuine homemade article, whatever the color of a political cloak. Administration stupidity and timidity, coupled with a consequent void in liberal leadership, are giving the Senator a brief heyday as a left-wing hero. But, for all his ambitions, it still seems likely that the prophecy he carved on a tree-trunk thirty-five years ago will some day prove to be, as well, Claude Pepper's epitaph.



COMMUNIST ATROCITIES AT BUCHENWALD

BY DONALD B. ROBINSON

WHEN the United States Army liberated the infamous Buchenwald Concentration Camp on April 11, 1945, it found that the 60,000 inmates had been dominated for three years by an underground organization composed of German Communists who used Gestapo-like tortures on their fellow-prisoners in an effort to rule them. American Army investigators discovered evidence that Communist cruelty at Buchenwald rivaled the savagery of the Nazis. The investigators, assigned to the Twelfth Army Group, arrived at the camp only a few hours after an American tank column had driven off the 1700 SS Death's Head Guards.

After interviewing the prisoners, digging through the records and then checking and cross-checking their facts, the Americans returned to the headquarters of the Twelfth Army Group with one of the most startling reports to come out of World War II. It was forwarded through military channels to SHAEF with this covering statement:

It is not just another report on a concentration camp. It does not deal ex-

clusively with the horrors of life in Buchenwald, nor with the brutalities of the Nazi pervers. It is the story of wheels within wheels. It tells how the prisoners themselves organized a deadly terror within the Nazi terror.

It is one of the most significant accounts yet written on an aspect of life in Nazi Germany.

The U. S. Army probe uncovered detailed evidence that a band of three hundred German Communist prisoners had seized control of a self-government system set up by the Nazis among the inmates of Buchenwald, and had then employed it to command and terrorize the camp population. The Communists' victims were numbered in the thousands.

THE report first passed over my desk when I was on duty at General Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters. Once I had studied it, I understood, finally, a remark made to me several days before by a German named Mueller who was a survivor of Buchenwald.

He was forty-five years old but he looked closer to seventy. His hair was white, his face gaunt. It seemed a superhuman effort for him merely to

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take off his serge jacket and his gray flannel shirt.

"Do you see it?" he asked in heavy, guttural English.

I saw it. His pathetically thin, stooped back was criss-crossed with the red scars of countless beatings.

"That," he asserted, "is my diploma from the Buchenwald Concentration Camp."

A Social Democrat, Mueller had been an official of a German trade union in the years before Hitler. He had managed to retain his freedom until 1938, when the Gestapo caught up with him and sent him to Buchenwald. He survived its agonies by sheer miracle.

"Did the Gestapo do that to you?" I inquired.

"Some of it, but not all," he answered. "Many of those scars were given me by my fellow prisoners because I did not agree with their politics."

That was all he would say. After I had read the Army report, I understood the rest.

II

WHAT happened at Buchenwald was truly appalling. What the Nazi barbarians did to their prisoners was beyond imagination. Unfortunately, certain German Communists made conditions even more unbearable.

Buchenwald, it will be remembered, was one of the first major concentration camps freed by the Allies. It was

there that the gas chambers, the torture hooks, the typhus experimental laboratories, the unburied bodies and the thousands of living corpses were first seen. General Eisenhower wept when he inspected it. The late, tough General Patton refused to enter for fear he'd become ill at the sights within.

A check of the camp records showed that it was set up by the Nazis in 1937. They used it exclusively then for three categories of German prisoners: political, criminal and Jewish. The political group consisted largely of Communists.

With the occupation of Austria in 1938, the Gestapo began to send foreigners to Buchenwald, too. Soon its rolls reached a peak of 60,000 and the SS officials found themselves swamped. They did not have enough guards to cope with the problem of administering so many inmates. It was then that they inaugurated the self-government program which the Communists were later to capture. The American investigators' report stated: "Unable to manage the prisoners alone, particularly as foreigners began to arrive, the SS instituted a system of self-administration (*Selbstverwaltung*), culminating early in 1940 in the appointment of police-trusties (*Lagerschütz*) from among the inmates."

These trustees, it seems, were given broad powers over the other prisoners. Initially they were chosen from among the ordinary German criminals, men confined as murderers, thieves and thugs. In 1942, however,

the German Communists began to "infiltrate" among them. They were able to do this because, in the words of the report:

They were the oldest residents with records of ten to twelve years in the concentration camps, and had thus built up personal relationships and experience which made them the logical appointees for positions of power. They clung together with remarkable tenacity, whereas the criminal elements were simply out for their own individual welfare, and had little group cohesiveness.

The report added:

The Communists maintained excellent discipline and received a certain amount of direction from outside the camp. They had brains and technical qualifications for running the various industries established at the camp. They made themselves indispensable.

The criminal elements, it was learned, tried to fight back as the Communists began to win control of the self-government organization. Their opposition was in vain. Working closely together, the German Communists were able to kill them or force them all out of office.

THE Army report, speaking of the Communists' rise to power, explained:

Their advances were not made without resistance from the criminals, but gradually the criminals were eliminated from power, partly by intimidation, partly with the aid of the SS.

Numbers of the criminals were killed by beatings, hangings or injections of phenol into the heart, or of air or milk into the veins. The injections were a specialty of

the camp doctor who became a partisan of the Communist faction.

The name of this physician was said to be Dr. Waldemar Hoven.

Soon a Communist was designated as the Camp Elder No. 1 (*Lager-Aelteste Eins*), the top prisoner position. He saw to it that his followers were appointed to other ranking posts. They in turn had German Communists assigned to such key spots in the camp administration as the labor office, the food supply office, the hospital. Before long, the Communists had complete control over virtually every inmate in the camp. The Nazi commandant of the camp and the SS guards were perfectly willing, the Army investigators found, to let the Communists have a free hand with all these inmates just so long as they managed them "efficiently." It appeared that prisoners who agreed with the Communists ate; those who didn't starved to death. Those who openly opposed the Communist sway were beaten, tortured or killed.

It was stated categorically by the Army report that: "The Communist trustees were directly responsible for a large part of the brutalities committed at Buchenwald. . . . Not all the beatings and killings were done by the SS guards." A list of German Communist trustees who committed such acts was compiled by the Army. At the head of it was a man named Hauptmann, who was the Assistant Camp Chief (*Kontrolleur*). Of him, the report asserted:

Eye-witness testifies that Hauptmann kicked prisoners in the testicles and beat them but always stopped when under observation of certain individuals known to have connections outside the camp. Hauptmann speaks English well. He talks like a sadist, his eyes gleaming with pleasure as he tells how "we disciplined this camp." Like many of the Communist leaders, "discipline" is his favorite word.

Other trustees cited by the Army for such bestialities included: Property-Room Chief (*Kapo-Effektenkammer*) Heinz Bausch and *Kapo* Dietsch of Block 46. This was the "injection block" of barracks, and Herr Dietsch was described as the "Private Executioner."

So many of the other German Communist inmates of the camp were reported also to have been guilty of these atrocities that the Army report simply cited them by category. They discovered that virtually all of the police trustees and almost all of the block chiefs in that section of Buchenwald known as the "Small Camp" had participated. These block chiefs in the "Small Camp" were said by the report to have mistreated the inmates under them mercilessly: "Besides personally beating their charges, these individuals sometimes forced whole blocks to stand barefoot in the snow for hours, apparently on their own initiative."

III

THE most important Communist stronghold at Buchenwald was the Labor Office. There it was that in-

mates were given work assignments or selected for transport to places like the dreaded Dora Camp at Mittelbau, which meant practically certain death. According to the Army report:

The key position of power was the Labor Office (*Arbeitsstatistik*). Here assignments were made and transports put together. Though this function was nominally performed by an SS Labor Allocation (*Arbeits-einsatz*) Officer, the details usually devolved on the trustees working in the office. These were usually instructed only as to the number of prisoners required for a particular transport, and were left to choose the names themselves.

Thus the trustees, who in time became almost exclusively Communist Germans, had the power of life and death over all other inmates. They could sentence a man or a group to almost certain death by assignment to one of the bad transports.

It was through their domination of this office that the Communists were able to defeat two challenges to their sway. The first occasion arose early in 1943, when huge groups of Poles were brought to Buchenwald from the camp at Auschwitz. "In Auschwitz," the Army report said, "the Poles had occupied the same ruling position as the Communists had in Buchenwald. They attempted to capture the same sort of control in their new home." The German Communists were too well entrenched. Inmates of the camp stated that the Communists easily smashed the Polish campaign by having many of the Poles executed in the typhus experiment station.

The second threat to Communist security developed some months later when large groups of French and Bel-

gian prisoners were sent to Buchenwald. The Communists met it, witnesses said, by having many of the first convoys dispatched immediately to the Dora Camp:

Towards the end of the year, big transports of French and Belgians began to arrive. Because of their Western outlook, these, too, represented a menace to the German Communist rule. Almost all of the first convoys were shipped immediately to the dreaded Dora Camp, which meant almost certain death. Of the remainder, any who dared complain were placed immediately on transport.

AMONG the other Communist strongholds at Buchenwald was the prison hospital. Its staff was composed almost 100 per cent of German Communists. The Army investigators found that:

Hospital facilities were largely devoted to caring for members of the Communist Party. All scarce drugs (and many were scarce at Buchenwald) were reserved for Communist patients, and hospital food was available for members of the Party even if not absolutely necessary.

Anti-Communists, when they became ill, were left largely without care.

Another of the Communist citadels was the Food Supply organization. The Army men learned: "Favorite groups received reasonable rations while others were brought to the starvation level."

The Property Room, called *Effektenkammer* in German, was also under Communist control. It received all the individual property of new prison-

ers as well as the paltry belongings of dead inmates.

When the SS guards fled from the camp to escape the advancing Americans, they took all the money and gold with them, but the Communist trusties grabbed everything else. Some they kept, some they distributed among their followers. The Army investigators found that: "Each Russian prisoner of war, for example, received a wrist watch as a token of solidarity. Each German trusty received good clothing and numerous other valuables." As a matter of fact, on the day Buchenwald was liberated, the Army intelligence men were astounded to note that the 300 surviving German Communists were dressed like "prosperous business men."

That was not the first prize that the German Communists cashed in on. Through their close relationship with the Nazi camp staff, they had also been able to get the lion's share of Red Cross and other parcels sent to prisoners. Of the thousands of packages sent by the French Red Cross to the French captives of Buchenwald, for instance, very few ever reached the addressees. The German Communist organization had decided that inasmuch as all prisoners were "comrades," all should share alike in the parcels which anyone received. With the agreement of the commandant, all parcels were turned over to the Camp Elder who was, of course, a German Communist. He gave them to the individual block leaders for division among the inmates of their

blocks. The Communist trustees, according to other prisoners, always received more than their fair share of these parcels. French prisoners who protested or who even went so far as to refuse permission for the diversion of their parcels were, it was said, put on "the transport list" to the death camps.

IV

As a result of the Army investigation, it was learned that the Communist underground at Buchenwald had maintained careful ties with Communist groups outside the camp. The report noted on this point:

Above the ostensible leaders of the trusty system was a group of mystery men. They took no prominent positions, but stayed in the background, acting as a political directorate. They received orders and information from outside the camp, and passed on orders and slogans to the Communist inmates.

The German Communist Party maintained an extraordinarily effective organization covering the whole country. But it was used only for liaison and was not risked on more active work. From Buchenwald an inmate went out regularly to establish contacts with a Communist courier bringing news and instructions. Bound by his loyalty to the party, the contact man never made use of his opportunity to escape personally.

At one time, the Buchenwald Communists, it was discovered, started laying the groundwork for a plot to overthrow Hitler. The date was September 1944. Few details of this project were ascertained, but it was deter-

mined that an Austrian Communist named Gustav Wagerer and a former Camp Elder, a German by the name of Roeschke, were the two leaders. Little came of the plan because someone participating in it talked too much in front of another Austrian prisoner named Straat. He passed the information on to a criminal inmate who told the SS. The Gestapo was immediately notified and shortly afterwards eight of the inmates involved were "struck off" the Buchenwald rolls.

IN ADDITION to the German Communists, the Army found that two other groups were well organized at Buchenwald. One was composed of Czech prisoners who had formed a "national committee" to represent them. All political factions from Right to Left were included on it.

The other was a Russian prisoner-of-war group, many captured Russians having been sent to Buchenwald for trying to escape. The Army report had some interesting remarks to make about relations between the Russian POWs and the German Communists: "The Russians were about 800 in number, after numerous mass executions had decimated their ranks. Though kept in separate blocks and distinguished by not having to wear camp numbers, they were treated exactly like the other inmates.

"Among them were a number of high officers, including from two to six colonels. Military discipline was maintained and the group kept pretty

much to itself. In the early days, they were terribly treated. Large numbers were killed at the camp. Later, their lot was bettered.

"Relations between the German Communists and the Russian prisoners of war were peculiar. The senior Russian officer, as representative of the workers' fatherland, had great influence over the German Communists. His word was law. However, he made little use of this advantage. Most of the Russian prisoners of war were evacuated before the Americans came."

It was discovered that even many non-German Communists were outspokenly bitter about their German fellow-believers: "There were thousands of non-German Communists in Buchenwald, particularly French, Dutch and Spanish. To some extent, these were absorbed into the German organization and took their orders from the Germans. A vast underground system of councils and meetings was built up to integrate them. Yet many did not like their German overlords.

"Many Russians and foreign Communists spoke of beating up the German Communists when the day of liberation arrived."

HOWEVER, a very shrewd *coup d'état* by the German Communists on that day of liberation averted any possible retaliatory action. Just as the first American tanks began to attack German troops in the vicinity, the 300 German Communists brought out

into the open three machine guns, fifty rifles and a number of hand grenades which they had stolen from the guards and hidden around the camp over the preceding several years. They opened fire on the remaining SS Death's Head guards and drove them off. They used the same weapons afterwards to dominate the 21,000 men and women still alive at Buchenwald until the U. S. Army took over.

V

WHAT were the motives of the German Communists at Buchenwald? When the Army investigators questioned members of the Communist organization on their brutal methods, they ran up against a blank wall. No Communist would admit more than that "the criminal elements were roughly dealt with in the struggle for power." Other prisoners told the Army that the German Communists justified their brutality on the ground that it was necessary for discipline. Conditions were far worse, they claimed, when the Nazis handled the inmates directly. According to these prisoners, the Communists were said to believe that "They assumed office to make Buchenwald a better place to live. To be able to do so, they had to produce a certain output of work, order and discipline. Thus their means were justified by the end."

After a consideration of all factors, the U. S. Army report analyzed the German Communists in this way:

"Sustained by the sacred egoism of their mission, by the thought of living to shape a Communist Germany, they lost their human idealism. They became hard, surviving not for themselves but in the name of the proletarian future of Germany, and thereby justifying many extreme methods of survival. . . ."

The Army official responsible for dis-

seminating the report concluded: "One thing is certain: There will have to be further investigation of the people of this and all concentration camps. Because the report makes it clear that in our search for decent, democratic elements which we can trust in Germany, we cannot accept at face value ALL those people who were incarcerated for opposing the Nazi brand of fascism."



AMERICA'S DISPLACED PERSONS

By VIVIEN B. KEATLEY

THE American photographer was shocked when his French war bride said, "Then you have labor camps for American workers, too?"

He looked about him at the sun-baked flat filled with dilapidated, windowless, floorless tents, and then at the child whom he was photographing. She was standing quite still, except for her bare toes, which were tracing a pattern in the thick dust. Her round little belly bulged out her single shapeless garment, made from a seed sack; her emaciated legs showed malnutrition as obviously as did any child in famine-threatened Europe.

"Yes," he said quietly. "Of course we do. For some of the poor devils, anyway."

The nine-year-old girl he was photographing in a cotton camp west of Phoenix, Arizona, in the spring of 1946, had never been inside a school. She was one of nearly 1,500,000 children of the migratory agricultural workers who harvest many of the crops of America. With their parents and adult relatives these children constitute our perennial Joad Fam-

ily, a national disgrace in peacetime, in wartime, and in today's disheartened world. John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* focused national attention on the Joads in 1939, but their plight is just as miserable today as it was then.

Our national Joad Family may add up to as many as four million Americans living in hopeless squalor and poverty all their lives. They are America's permanently displaced persons. And unlike those in the occupied areas of Europe, our American refugees give every indication of remaining "ill fed, ill clothed, and ill housed."

Nobody knows precisely how many Americans are thus "adrift on the land." Migratory agricultural workers are neither organized nor classified. They carry no social security numbers. Their names appear on no voters' registers although they are American citizens.

The average Joad Family comprises a husband and wife in their mid-thirties, with five children of school age or younger. They are white, na-

VIVIEN B. KEATLEY has studied at first hand the life of the migratory farm laborers, traveling with her husband, a former relief investigator.

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tive-born. The only thing they know is the land. They regard themselves, not as units in an industrialized-crop army, but as independent farmers temporarily out of luck. They are mistaken. They are America's second-class citizens, and unless something is done for them, their children and their children's children will continue to "follow the crops."

II

AMERICAN migratory agricultural workers are as underprivileged a group of human beings as can be found anywhere in the world. Their living conditions are as primitive as those of Chinese peasants. They set up housekeeping for a few weeks or months at a time in temporary shelters. They get up each morning, fix breakfast, eat, go into the fields until sundown, come back to their miserable quarters, fix dinner, eat, sit about and talk in tired little clusters. Their furniture rarely includes chairs, often not even a bed. They sit on boxes or suitcases; often they sleep on pallets of quilts thrown on the dirt "floor" of their tents. Their yearly earnings are small, their transportation costs in search of work are high: "We just make enough for beans. When the car needs repairs, it comes out of the beans."

They exist on starvation diets; milk, even for babies, is unknown. They depend largely on beans, bread, potatoes and canned goods. Each Saturday afternoon they go to nearby

towns, where only their money is welcome, and purchase the next week's supplies. On Sundays the women wash their clothes in the irrigation ditches; the men tinker with old jalopies, or have a game of baseball if there's enough room. "We like to keep busy," they will tell you. "Just settin' around worryin' if the beans'll hold out drives you crazy."

They are unable ever to accumulate sufficient savings to leave this wretched treadmill. And they are themselves wretched, as Carlyle once defined the term: "It is not to die, or even to die of hunger that makes a man wretched; many men have died. . . . But it is to live miserable we know not why; to work sore and yet gain nothing; to be heartworn, weary, yet isolated and unrelated. . . ."

Our migrants, like the lowest caste in India, are pariahs and untouchables. They belong nowhere. They enjoy no participation in normal social life. They are segregated from the community, without access to its hospitals, schools, libraries, doctors, dentists, organized welfare or relief services. "If those fruit tramp kids come to school, you'll have to provide more teachers and schoolrooms," local educators say. When government investigators start cases against child-labor-law violations the growers say to the parents, "You'd better move on; work is slacking up here." Then there are no witnesses to testify when hearings are held later. In 1937 the Maricopa (Arizona) County Relief Board announced publicly that no

more food or funds would be available for non-resident cotton pickers "even if someone is dying."

Women often give birth along the roadside, sheltered by a cottonwood tree, or in a squatters' camp beneath a bridge. Many growers will not employ a family with a pregnant woman. Mother and infant mortality rates are high.

"It's too bad," a potato field worker said to me once, "but there are already too many of us, anyway. No matter how much work there is, there ain't enough for all of us to earn decent wages."

An over-supply of transient agricultural workers is considered desirable by large-scale growers, who are the "farmers" represented by the "farm bloc." Arizona growers say the "local population is not cotton-conscious; we *have* to bring in outside transient labor."

A classic summation of the California attitude is this: "We on the land have always recognized that California agricultural labor requirements made impossible to those people so employed the full efforts of American citizenship and the possibilities of partaking of our normal standards of life." In Texas and Florida, where there are many Negro transients, they say: "Give the Negro barely enough to eat to keep him strong, and just enough clothes to hide his nakedness; otherwise he'll develop the big head and get the idea he is anybody's equal." In Michigan orchards migrants are preferred be-

cause "They pick the fruit and move on. The sheriff sees to it that they do. You don't have to worry about their winter coal supply. Besides, they can't vote."

THE housing picture of our agricultural workers isn't pretty; it never was pretty. During depression years their living conditions were intolerable; during the war, they became worse, if anything. A representative of the Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, said on February 27, 1946: "We were shocked at the deplorable health and sanitary conditions under which the cotton pickers were living. I have personally never seen such terrible conditions as we encountered in Arizona." Mr. E. F. Vickers, Jr., chief of the labor department of the Industrial Commission of Arizona, has said of these camps:

Living conditions . . . are deplorable. Tents are huddled close together. Dishwater and other refuse thrown out creates a stench and, especially after a rain, the places present a depressing picture. There is no drainage and no provision for proper toilet facilities. On at least one occasion where the investigators were comfortable in overcoats, children were found naked, playing in pools of water from previous rains which had accumulated in low ground where dishwater had been thrown out, creating a stinking scum.

Mr. C. E. Hazard has made sample studies of housing facilities occupied by seventy thousand agricultural workers who harvest sugar beets and potatoes in Colorado, Wyoming and

Montana. His conclusions represent the statistics of poverty in the nation with the "highest standard of living in the world":

60,000 live in homes without sewage disposal;

67,000 have no garbage disposal facilities; 10,000 drink ditch water;

34,000 have a questionable water supply;

33,000 have no bathing facilities whatever.

Housing for these workers includes converted railroad cars, sheds, chicken houses, barns, tents, shacks, anything which can be considered shelter. The workers, Mr. Hazard observed, "seem to die fastest in areas of greatest agricultural prosperity. The Colorado county leading in the production of potatoes also leads in the death rate from typhoid, diarrhea, and enteritis."

III

SOMETIMES not even foxholes are provided. Frequently along the berry circuit of Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Michigan and New Jersey, no shelter of any kind is provided. A transient army of more than six hundred thousand picks the berries for America's breakfast table, for her pies and jellies, for her ice cream sodas and sundaes. These berry pickers often camp in groves, along roadsides, wherever they can find space. They have no sanitary facilities of any kind, not even the usual unlimited privies. They make do with buckets of water from nearby streams or farms. Asked why she was not in school, one

ten-year-old child looked surprised and said calmly, "Oh, we aren't people. We're berry pickers."

Indiana tomatoes are justly famous. The hundred thousand acres of Indiana planted to tomatoes produce a five-million-dollar crop every year. Indiana residents are glad to work in the canneries, but they refuse the back-breaking work in the fields. For this transients move into Johnson County, center of the tomato industry, but no provision is made for housing them. One enterprising Indiana woman charged forty-five migratory workers one dollar a week each to live in her barn. They secured their water, as did her hogs, from the shallow barnyard pump.

In the Yakima district of Washington, between thirty and forty thousand workers arrive annually for the hop and apple season. They cook out of doors, for stoves are rarely provided. Drainage is bad, and sickness, especially dysentery, is common. "Sure sell a lot of castor oil when the pickers are here," a druggist once said to me. "Nice profit in it, too, even when you sell it by the gallon."

The "Florida season" for forty thousand migratory workers lasts a little longer than it does for resorters who spend in a week more than a worker earns in a season. It lasts from October to June. Barracks housing is common. This consists of dozens of single rooms, usually built around a central court with a common toilet, oftener than not indescribably filthy. Water is secured from a central tap or

purchased at from one to five cents a bucket. In these barracks as many as ten people often live in a room twelve by fourteen feet.

In the so-called "ditch bank camps" of agricultural America, communities of tents spring up. Only irrigation-ditch water is available, even for drinking. Toilet facilities, if any, are at best limed privies. Bathing and laundry facilities are unknown, and there is no electricity even in camps where the power line runs by the edge of the camp.

"These camps aren't so bad," one grower argued. "This is as good as these people are used to. Give 'em wooden floors and they'd tear them up and use them for firewood. And they wouldn't know what a flush toilet or a bathtub was for." Mrs. Joan Pratt, director of the Tulare County, California, welfare department, said, "You can't change the habits of primitive people from the Southern and Midwestern states."

THE growers are evidently agreed on this. They objected so much to migratory camps set up under the Farm Security Administration that they had riders attached to wartime agricultural bills to provide that no new camps be established. Their objections to these camps are several. "You can't evict workers from a government camp to break a strike," one grower explained. "Our crops are perishable. We can't afford labor trouble." In opposing the Farm Security Administration an American Farm

Bureau Federation spokesman said the Department of Agriculture was "trying to force the farmers to provide toilets, baths, hot and cold water, and all that red-tape stuff."

Owners and growers who build labor camps do not locate them near popular highways. No readily observable ugly poverty proclaims the misery which harvests the rich production of America's green fields. But wherever you find fertile land operated on a large scale by industrial methods, you will find the hovels of America's migratory agricultural workers.

They are hidden in the orchards of Michigan, California, Oregon and Washington; they are near the sugar beet fields of Colorado, Michigan, and Ohio; the "vegetable gardens" of the Rio Grande Valley and Florida and California; the cotton fields of Texas, Arizona, California and New Mexico. They dot the potato circuit of Florida, South and North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey and New York.

You can drive along the main highways of the nation unaware of the myriad labor camps, but they are there behind the fields. Single men live in skid-row slums of cities, and you would be astonished at their numbers if you were there before dawn some morning when they emerge like moles from dark flop-houses at the call of "Cotton hands!" or "Pickers!" shouted by truck-drivers who transport them to and from the fields. You could see shacktowns built at

the edges of cities and towns in the agricultural belts, and shudder at such shiftlessness and sordid misery. Yet these flimsy cabins, lean-tos, homemade trailers, one- and two-room shacks are treasured homes, and represent the highest housing goal to which migrant agricultural workers aspire. They are located in cheap subdivisions of sub-marginal land where no one else would live, where drainage is poor, floods not uncommon, yet water scarce and expensive; they have no sewage, no schools, no police protection. Yet these pitiful areas are developed by "successful" migrants who have finally achieved the dream of every transient agricultural worker: at long last they "own their own piece of dirt." Their communities cling to the fringes of our city civilization, scrabbling for a foothold on decent living conditions.

IV

FEW agricultural areas offer enough year-round employment to provide a livelihood for many residents of these "Little Oklahomas." Most of the workers of the land are doomed to constant shifting about, "working the land," as they put it sadly, "for men we don't know and who don't know us."

These workers are at the bottom of the agricultural ladder, and there are no rungs by which they may climb up: "The worst thing is, we can't even do as good for our kids as was done for us. I lived in a house, and everybody

knew us. We was a family. I went to church, and I went to school. It wasn't so much, maybe, but I can't even give my kids that much. You know you like to do more for your kids than your parents did for you. But we can't even do as much."

"We can't make our kids go to school," a woman apologized. "Not that we don't need the money they earn, but we'd rather do without, if only they'd go to school and maybe learn enough to do something besides work in crops. But we move around so much they get behind and don't pass. That makes 'em feel ashamed and dumb. Besides, the other kids laugh at 'em and call 'em Okies. We ain't from Oklahoma." She smiled wryly, then added, "We're from Missouri."

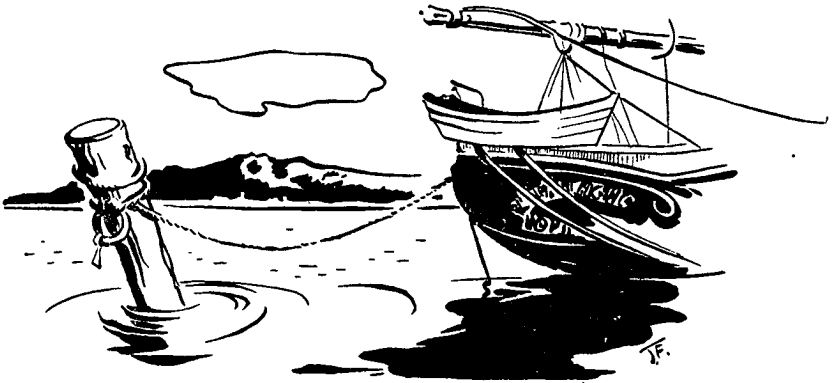
"I think I could stand living this way," a thin-faced, worried-looking woman said, "if only I didn't worry about what if there ain't enough work next year — we don't get any of that unemployment insurance, you know. Or what if we get sick? Or what will become of us when we get too old to work? We don't even live in one place long enough to draw an old-age pension. What's going to become of us?"

IT is through no fault of their own that our migrants are homeless and poverty ridden. The industrialization of agriculture decreased jobs and lowered living standards from the level of the family-sized farm. It brought technological displacement

to those who knew only the land, and no solution has as yet been found. It produced hundreds of thousands of American citizens who are homeless and voiceless. They have no political power in a land governed by pressure groups, no one of which is concerned about them except to keep them plentiful, available and subdued. They do not even attract union organizers. "Only fanatics are willing to live in shacks or tents and get their heads broken in the interests of migratory labor," an AFL spokesman was quoted as saying in the *New York Times* of January 20, 1935. That attitude still holds.

America is a sentimental rather than a logical nation. Its people are

quick to respond to dramatic emergency appeals for the relief of distressed persons all over the face of the earth. Paradoxically, America is one of the slowest of nations to arouse itself to remedy long-standing social evils. The festering sore of our agricultural human erosion is not a new infection. It was not new when John Steinbeck dramatized it with *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939. Its black shadow, with its aftermath of illiteracy, poverty and misery, has long lain over our brave new world with its avowed concern for social, national and international security, for decent housing, minimum wages and hours, and year-round employment for an educated and healthy populace.



SEX AND LITERARY ART

BY BEN RAY REDMAN

DURING the past twenty years or so, under our eyes and noses, something very interesting has happened to American fiction. To put the matter bluntly, it has become the most licentious literature that has ever enjoyed popular distribution. To match its sexual frankness, one must go back to some of the Chinese classics, or to an Aretino, or a Petronius. But Aretino was frankly pornographic, Petronius wrote for a limited audience, and the Chinese authors addressed themselves only to scholars, for they were readable only by scholars. The point I am making is that never before has the general public of any country been exposed to such plain talk about the ancient facts of life as is now found in our native fiction. This state of affairs has come into being gradually, quietly, indeed almost silently so far as critical comment is concerned. Yet it is obviously worthy of comment.

One does not have to be very old to remember when Restoration Comedy was considered quite naughty, when Dreiser's heavy-handed honesty was

thought daring, when Cabell's double meanings and sly allusions were the last word in sophisticated audacity. A generation still close to the literary conventions of the Victorian age looked back a little enviously to the free air that had once been breathed by Smollett and Fielding. Those were the days when red-bound editions of Boccaccio, Bandello, Rabelais and the *Heptameron* were kept discreetly under bookstore counters and on the reserved shelves of libraries. Look at those once segregated volumes now, and then look at the novels that crowd our counters, that are frequently even chosen by our book clubs for the widest possible distribution. One need not name them, for their name is legion; and there is a new one every few minutes.

A novelist used to think that his work was done when he had brought his characters to the bedroom door. But it is at that very threshold that the heavy work of many a contemporary novelist begins. A row of asterisks once did heroic duty, while sparing the blushes of the tender

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reader. Now those same asterisks are translated into as many pages of explicit prose, and nobody seems to blush unless his name happens to be Sumner.

Popular novelists, particularly the ladies, compete at the fascinating game of tumbling their heroines in and out of as many beds as possible, while their more "serious" confrères approach the fundamental theme of sexual congress with all the earnestness, all the bustle and all the scientific equipment of a radio engineer arranging to broadcast the proceedings of a World Peace Conference. And when the heroine's clothes begin to slip from her, the novelist's technique becomes that of a too-zealous motion picture director, with a battery of cameras shooting from every possible angle. That he loves his work is usually obvious, but too frequently he fails to communicate any of his own warm enthusiasm to his reader. Overproduction defeats its ends, as it so often does, and boredom ensues. The clinical scalpel leaves romance dead on the operating table, and the most conscientious descriptions of the act of love are apt to exclude love itself from the picture.

ONE by one, the short and ugly words have come down from the walls and fences and crept into the printed pages of our most respectable publishers; cautiously, even timorously at first, but with steadily increasing confidence as their progress has remained unchallenged, until now

every one of the four-letter words has received the accolade of a reputable imprint. These are words that were once potent, because they were forbidden; and only because they were forbidden. As they pass into more and more general circulation, they are doomed to become like other words, their peculiar power dropping from them. Shocking though they may be on their first appearances in print, they must soon cease to shock. There is a law of diminishing returns.

It was not so long ago, for example, that George Bernard Shaw could rock an English theatre audience by the mere device of having an actress utter the word "bloody." Today the same word comes across the English footlights with no more force than any other bit of vulgar slang. It may be hard to believe now that all the short and ugly words could ever be robbed of their power, but it will surely happen if these words continue to be printed and reprinted in books available to readers of all ages and conditions. Which of course will be a good thing, for every sound moralist must believe that the reclamation of a verbal black sheep, the transformation of a "dirty" word into a clean word, is a victory on the side of the angels. The only catch is that, man being what he is, our nature will probably compel us to invent a whole new batch of forbidden monosyllables to replace those we have redeemed from the pit.

The law of diminishing returns also applies to descriptions of once-forbidden scenes and to the elaboration

of once-forbidden themes. The novelist who would exploit extreme license is in the position of one who has to call always for madder music and stronger wine. He must be forever strengthening his grog to be sure of achieving his desired effect. He must run ever faster to remain in the same place.

BUT there is a point beyond which the novelist cannot strengthen his mixture, a speed that he cannot increase. There is a dead limit. And when that limit has been reached, as it has been, I should judge, in one or two recent books, or at least in one or two recent passages by esteemed American writers, one looks back and wonders if the whole process has been worth the trouble. The fact is that all the literary freedom in the world is valueless without creative imagination, whereas that same imagination can function with complete success within conventionally prescribed limits. Even in the specifically erotic field this is true. Turn to the livelier passages of *Venus and Adonis*, for example, and you will note that where some of our novelists linger with flashlight, microscope, and technicolor camera, the greatest of English poets paused only, as the announcers say, for station identification. He refused to make the climbing of a sacred mount an all-day journey. Grant a writer the most extreme license, as we have granted it, and he can produce no more effective erotic images than those conjured up by the comparatively chaste prose of *Made-*

moiselle de Maupin, nor can he probe more accurately into the delights and agonies of love than did Benjamin Constant in *Adolphe*.

One looks at such a masterpiece as Constant's novel, and at other masterpieces of fiction, and one wonders what their authors could possibly have gained by the possession of greater freedom than they had. Even in the particular province that our "realists" have claimed as their very own, it would appear that the old masters were able to operate with astonishing success, although they were working under wraps. I mean, of course, the field of adultery and fornication; for it is in this province, if any, that our contemporary novelists may claim to be specialists and experts. Here their curiosity has been insatiable, here their industry has been tireless, here they have worked most zealously to put the truth and the whole truth into words. But what are their famous victories, compared with the literary triumphs of the past? Consider only a few great novels of illicit love, and then ponder what they might have gained or lost by being written with the complete absence of reticence that is now fashionable.

Consider, for example, *Adolphe* and *Anna Karenina* and *The Scarlet Letter* and *Vanity Fair* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Would the relations of *Adolphe* and *Ellemore* — the seige, the success, the ennui, the deception and the final tragedy — have been any more completely realized had Benjamin Constant exposed the ulti-

mate physical intimacies of his lovers? Would the tragic passion of Anna for Count Vronsky have been translated into a greater novel had Tolstoy chosen and been able to set down every last detail of their fatal concupiscence? How, I wonder, would any of our realists have treated the story of Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale? Surely he would have permitted us to be present at the conception of little Pearl: that would have been the very least he could have done for his readers. But how much more did Hawthorne do for us by walking in the way of convention!

Would we know Becky Sharp better, would her stature be greater, would her place among the heroines of fiction be more secure, would our understanding of her relations with Rawdon Crawley and Lord Steyne and Josephy Sedley be clearer, if Thackeray had said the many things he left unsaid? There is no need to pause for an answer. And what about poor Tess? Can you not see what one of our unnamed realists would have done with the scene in *The Chase*, where darkness and silence ruled? It would have been good for a half-dozen pages at least, during which author and reader would have reveled in an abundance of physical description. But all this explicitness would have accomplished less than Hardy accomplished with Tess's trustful breathing and little muslin dress.

The fact is that our novelists, floundering in their freedom, are all too liable to become bogged down in

a mess of anatomical and physiological details, and while they are so bogged they lose sight of universal values because they are up to their eyes in particulars. The novelists cited above were all essentially artists, and, being artists, they knew that there is no art without selection, reticence, translation and significant symbolism; and they knew also that the greatest art is that which employs the particular in service of the universal. If our writers have claimed and won complete liberty solely for art's sake, they have been misguided, for art and absolute liberty have never been happy bedfellows. If some of them have indulged in even more extreme license simply for the sake of shocking and selling, they may have succeeded briefly, but they have chosen a road that comes quickly to a dead end.

II

VERBAL conventions, like all other conventions, are artificial: the product of common agreement. Taboos, in civilized societies at least, come and go with quite extraordinary rapidity. The various and changing manifestations of feminine modesty through the ages, and in different countries, is a pertinent and rewarding theme. Here we have the veiled face and there the bare breast; this year skirts go down, and the next year they go up. At the time of the First World War long black stockings were required wearing for females on our more conservative bath-

ing beaches. Today a pair of long black stockings, on a pair of good-looking legs, would almost certainly find itself heading a procession of admiring males, while its wearer would almost surely be accused of engaging in unfair competitive practice.

But one need travel neither in time nor space to note the artificial character of our conventions of modesty. The ordinary girl who would instinctively squeal, run, or protest, if surprised in her underclothes by a masculine acquaintance, will lie on a public beach exposing all but a few square inches of her precious skin to every passer-by: photographers and all interested observers welcome. A tourist from Mars would undoubtedly say that the paradox made no sense; but we, being human and no Martians, know that it makes perfect sense.

And it is the same with words. If the nudity of the beach is not yet acceptable in the drawing-room, neither is the verbal frankness now permitted between book covers yet allowable between magazine covers. That is why it would be quite impossible for me to quote here chapter and verse from the kind of fiction I am discussing. Convention would be outraged, and the law would pounce. It is all very comical, of course, for magazine readers are also novel readers, and books and magazines, published under such different sets of rules that one might think them to be the products of different cultures, lie side by side on the same table. It is comical, but so are people.

Someday, although the day now seems fairly distant, the same degree of license may obtain in magazines and newspapers that now obtains in the world of fiction. Whether this happens or does not happen is unimportant. Newspaper and magazine writing would become neither better nor worse as a result of complete liberty. The first reporter to describe a rape case in lavish detail would undoubtedly score a sensation: the thousandth to do so would be the docile follower of a journalistic convention.

III

THERE are those who will say that because the four-letter words are very much with us, because our novels abound in elaborate descriptions of the female body and in explicit accounts of the sexual act, censorship has failed. And so saying they will betray their misunderstanding of the entire subject, for in this particular field censorship is quite impossible, and there can be no talk of failure when there is no chance of success. You can censor war news and political writing and religious writing — on the ground level, at least, if not on the underground level — but you cannot censor sexual stimuli, and this means that you cannot successfully censor what is familiarly known as obscenity, even on the ground level.

As I argued in two articles published in *Scribner's* some years ago, when it comes to obscenity, everyone rolls his own according to his taste, and the

raw materials for the operation are inexhaustible and always available. Take away one stimulus and another will be found, of equal potency. Obscenity, like a sneeze, comes from within. It is all done with the mirrors of the mind. Almost any stimulus will serve to produce the sufficiently desired obscene image. One generation of youths and yokels gets the same thrill from the mail order catalogue advertisements of feminine underwear, or from the home book of medicine, that another generation gets from "art magazine" photographs of naked women. A glimpse of ankle served our fathers quite as well as a glimpse of bare flesh above a stocking-top serves us today.

Guard even children against obscenity, and they will make their own, just as efficiently as they make little mud pies. That is why the Comstocks and Sumners of this world are so pitiable. They are so earnest, so active and so utterly uninformed regarding the nature of the forces with which they seek to deal.

THERE can be no question, then, of censoring or not censoring literature with a view to eliminating obscenity. It flourished, to the degree it was desired, when literature was the prisoner of puritanical rules and regulations; and it will doubtless flourish, to the degree desired, when literature is completely free. The most profitable question we can ask regarding the new freedom is, quite simply: What are our writers doing with it? And the answer, I think, is equally simple: According to their talents they are writing well or ill, just as their fathers and grandfathers wrote, for all the freedom in the world cannot add one cubit to an author's stature. The fact that a man is licensed to say anything he chooses does not necessarily mean that he has anything to say. If the best writers of today and tomorrow do as well with freedom as the best writers of yesterday and the day before did without it, we can ask no more of them. To expect more would be to mistake the nature of literature itself.



HUMILITY

BY ETHEL BARNETT DE VITO

ONLY age can truly see
 The meaning of humility
 When men, with all their lessons learned,
 Have come to be not so concerned
 With gaining gifts that life may give,
 But thankful to be left to live.

FROM A SCHOOLTEACHER'S NOTEBOOK

BY LINDA WEAVER

CHARLES, one of my second graders, comes in before school and says, "Miz Weaver, Mary is cussing. She said —"

Miz Weaver: I don't want to hear it.

Charles: She was cussing her dog. She called him a ——. She said, "Go home, you —!"

"You must not talk like that, Charles."

"I was just telling you what she said."

"Please tell Mary to come in."

She is coming in, anyway, to put her book in her desk. It is rank egotism, of course, to feel that way, but she is one of the reasons a teacher can't quit. She is a pitiful little thing. She and her mother and sister receive fifteen dollars monthly from the county. ("Papa went off with another lady.")

Yet her cheeks are plump enough, for they raise some of their food, and their neighbors help them along. Her blonde hair would be pretty if it were cared for. It is in her clothing, her dingy grubbiness, and in the things

she says so casually about her home life that her poverty shows. And it hurts the worse because of her puppy-like devotion to me. Looking at her as she puts her book away, I wonder if she has slept in the dress I made for her.

Well, what to do? After all — in a technical sense — she was correct in her manner of addressing the dog. On the other hand, of course. . . .

I say: "Mary, Charles tells me you called your dog a name."

"Yes'm." She is unabashed. "He follered me to school."

"Let's try to say 'followed'."

"Yes'm, I said follered. Say, our cow died."

Stark tragedy. I exclaim: "That's terrible!"

"Yes'm. Fell over the bluff and broke her neck."

So it was accidental. At least the meat can be canned. "Did you get someone to dress her?"

"No'm. Too late when we found her. She died when she had her calf."

"You mean — well — she couldn't have died from the calf and from

LINDA WEAVER is the pen name of a writer who is also a schoolteacher in the Ozarks. She and her husband run a farm there in addition to contributing fiction and articles from time to time to various national magazines.

breaking her neck, too. She was weak from having the calf and fell over the bluff?"

"No'm. The calf was done sent to market."

"Then she didn't die from —" oh, well, skip it. "What on earth will you do for milk now?"

"Oh, we're doing fine. The next year we got another cow."

Just a lapse of time which meant nothing to her. She had been reviewing the incident on the way to school: it would make something to tell the teacher. She is already outside before I remember I have been completely sidetracked about the dog.

Ernest comes in with a scratched finger. I reach for the bottle of turpentine in my purse. Disappointed, he asks, "Where's the red stuff?"

I have put the red stuff away. Yesterday when I opened it, on the occasion of my first medical case of the term, I not only had to apply it to the small finger from which I removed a splinter, but to more than a dozen other fingers, knees, shins and arms which were already healed nicely over and without the need of antiseptic. Several other warriors troop in with tommy guns and pistols, searching for wounds. They see the undramatic turpentine and troop back out.

OUR TOWN has no industry. It is a nice place to live and a great many folks with pensions and private means make their homes here. The

merchants live by selling commodities to them and to each other, but this leaves quite a segment of our population to eke out an existence at odd jobs around town and cutting cedar posts in the hills and working for the little "peckerwood" sawmills here and there in the timber. So the dividing line between our two economic classes is very sharp, and in the lower grades of our school system we see this most strongly. In the upper grades the line disappears to a great extent, partly because some of the children quit school entirely when they can, having no incentive held before them at home. Others, who are ambitious, make a surprisingly large amount of money on week ends, after school and in the summers, and their industry is reflected in their appearance.

It is this "submerged third" that makes the work in the lower grades not only so difficult, but so hard on the emotions of the teachers, because these children need so desperately to learn. Perhaps there is something of this same situation everywhere.

MONDAY. I am in the midst of one of those spells, which seem to afflict all teachers, of thinking my pupils are going to learn only half what they should by the time the year ends. I started the class on a quick week's review of their first reader at the opening of school. Four weeks are gone. Some of the pupils — including in part those from "the nicest homes," too — are still in it, apparently hav-

ing forgotten everything they learned last year. But there isn't room in the first grade to put them back. Not even a seat for Ernest who, after these four weeks, cannot read anything even in a pre-primer. Not that putting them or him back would really help.

Ernest is the best in the room in numbers, but he is utterly beyond his depth when he sweats and fidgets over a page which says: "This is John. This is Spot. Spot is a dog." He has given his age as twelve. He looks older. In private, his sister says, "Well, he claims he's twelve, but mama says she thinks he's anyway fourteen." None of the numerous adults in the family can read, either. My work seems cut in half on the days he misses.

Another week, and the room has taken one of those unaccountable spurts. Everyone but Ernest is in the second reader. I put him in it, too. Why not? One incomprehensible book is no harder than another, and it makes him feel better.

But perhaps the spurt was not so unaccountable. One day I said: "Those who have good lessons tomorrow may have special privileges the last period — story books, or something like that." Now they no longer ask to get books from the cases. They ask if they may have Special Privileges. I think books may always be thus thought of by them — and capitalized. The same with another thing they like. The first Friday of school I said: "Instead of a spelling lesson this

afternoon, we'll have an old-fashioned spelling match." They were quite taken with the phraseology, for some reason. No one ever mentions just a plain, common spelling match these days. It's always an Old-Fashioned one.

EVERYONE is working on masks for Hallowe'en. I am taking up money for the cafeteria meal tickets. Suzanne is eight, black headed, and pretty. She will be very nice to look at when she is eight years older. She looks well now in her brown slacks. I reach her desk with the tickets and learn it is not just a man's world, after all. Says she, "I left my money in my other pants."

The door opens. Ernest, who is tardy, is bringing a new boy in. The new boy has a note. It says:

Mr Wilbren Bockmeister

age 9 secont grade

he hasen went schol sense last fall

borned july 4 1936 at Dever Colorada

Mrs F Bockmeister

One for my mail bag. I enter Mr. Wilbren Bockmeister, aged 9, on the register. Then I decide it must surely be Wilburn. I change it. Into my folder the note goes, on top of the one which says:

I gave Huril some laxatives please let him leave the room. if need be. About the T. B. test. no I dont thank it nessary. Dr said Huril in perfect health but in need of glassis thank Mrs. G.

Beneath that one in the folder is an intercepted love note which I treasure. This was written in school by one

seven-year-old to another and reads quite simply:

Dar Betty I like you much

And beneath that:

I am write a fews line to let you know Billy have been sick since visiting his gramp pa up in Missouria for 4 days. I hope I can make him well again. Mrs Weaver, I am going to have another baby in March 1946 of next year. I have to take care of myself. Billy's Mother.

ANOTHER Monday. Books have not yet "taken up." Huril and James and Lee are telling me episode umpty-ump of the Man Monster which they saw at the show Saturday. This is routine for Monday. Throughout the day they and others will recall additional thrilling happenings in the film to recount. And sometime during the recitals Tina will say, "My daddy is an ordained minister. We don't go to shows, but my big brother goes and daddy says he will go to hell."

The bell rings. The pupils come in. Surreptitiously they park their gum under their desks. ("Miz Weaver, Ernest stoled my gum.") "No I never. This is some I found stuck up by the door.") I open the Bible for our daily required reading, skip a passage about some begatters, and —

"Miz Weaver —"

"Let's not speak without permission."

"I got my hand up."

"What is it?"

"You hear about the fights downtown Saturday night?"

Yes, I have heard. ("Most dis-

gusting," today's local paper will say concerning the one between two women — but darn' good, said those who saw it.) All hands are up now.

"Four or five of 'em. One at the pool hall and one at the dance and one in all the beer joints. And a man got cut up."

I have heard about that, too. "It's bad," I say. "It's terrible that things like that could happen in our town. Who was the poor man?" Instantly I regret having asked. What if it should turn out to be one of their fathers?

"Oh, just a sailor boy," my informer answers casually. And I see I have been used only for a stooge as he adds, "My uncle done it. My aunt's been runnin' around with a sailor boy and my uncle cut 'im up."

ALL week I hear details of the impending trip which Ovie and Frances are going to take to visit their mother, who works in another town, and of the jackets and dress and trousers and such their mother has sent them. The journey has now been moved up to Friday, when their mother's boss at the restaurant is coming for them, and they go home at noon that day.

On Monday they report a glorious time. All Saturday morning and Sunday morning they got to sit in the boss's car in front of the restaurant and watch people go by. In the afternoons they went to the show. And on Sunday afternoon their mother and

the boss went with them. Sunday night, mother and the boss brought them home.

FRANCES is wearing a wedding ring. She had once announced offhandedly that if her sister (who kept the house) wouldn't give her the money for her workbook she would "just steal it out of her purse," so I am a little worried about the ring.

"Mama gave it to me," Frances declared.

"Well, you must be careful not to lose it. She may want it again."

"Oh, she's got plenty more. Four, altogether. This is the one my daddy gave her."

"Where is your daddy?"

"He's dead. He died the day he tried to choke my sister to death. He got mad because we stole his chewing tobacco. He held her over the sink to choke her. Then mama hit him over the head with the poker. He fell dead on the way to town to tell the law on her."

"Did they do anything to her?"

"No'm. The doctor said he had heart trouble. They didn't find the place on his head. . . . We were sorry about the tobacco. We tried to give it back to him, but he was dead. . . ."

IT is Mary's turn to read. (She is the one whose cow fell off the bluff.) She says, "Miz Weaver, mama got married yesterday."

I silently thank our dear Father in the heavens. Maybe things will be better for them now.

"That's fine! What is the man's name?"

"I don't know his name. But I've got his picture."

She hands it to me — dirty, apparently walked on. It is a printed autographed picture of Alan Ladd from a weighing machine. . . .

Mary has now been back in school a few days from something which I was afraid might be itch. Formerly, she had ridden to her turn-off each day at 2:15, when my husband drove to the school for me. Now we were afraid for her to ride with us, and we thought the best way to avoid it was to have him to come a few minutes later. Apparently Mary saw through the entire thing when I told her he would be late and that she should run along home. (She rode only two blocks; it was the ride and not the conserved energy which attracted her.) When I went out at the appointed time, there she sat waiting on the schoolground. "I didn't mind waiting at all," she said.

Next day I told her I was walking home. Again, when I reached the schoolground, there she sat. In a very disappointed tone, she said, "Well, sure enough, he never come for us."

CHRISTMAS week, and I am wearing my new scarf which I have received ahead of time. I feel very gay. Our literary agent has just sent us a check almost equal to my year's salary (twenty dollars a week, plus a yearly bonus of a hundred, in this

school) for a short story, and with it several smaller checks for other stories and articles. It is our best month yet in the writing business. I wonder why I keep teaching. I took the job to help out "until we can find another teacher" and apparently I am stuck with it.

I am aware that someone is running to catch up with me as I walk to school. It is Tina. Tina says, "Miz Weaver, you know what my sister up in high school said? She said that scarf makes you look like you've got a potato sack over your head."

THE approaching Christmas program has everyone excited. Nobody has the vaguest curiosity as to what would be left if Santa brought twelve apples and eight of them were eaten. All hands want to go to the lavatory twice in one period to kill time. I know that most of them don't even need to go once. I say, "Everyone who goes more than once must make up the time at recess." All who have been once subside. Others are awaiting their turn.

Junior (Junior Wilson is the full name, according to his mother) had to "go real bad" when he raised his hand, but decided he could wait. Now James is asking, "Has Junior gone yet? I can't wait."

"Junior, have you been to the basement yet?"

Junior looks up blankly from the chimney he is painting, and I repeat the question. "Let's see," he reflects.

"I don't remember if I have or not."

I laugh. I can't help it. Everyone laughs.

CHARLES walks in three minutes late after recess. Several explain simultaneously that he has been sliding down the hill on a board. (Part of our schoolground is precipitously steep.) They tell me that when the bell rang he said he was going to slide five more times before he came in.

"Is this true?" I ask him.

"No'm." His black eyes are steadfast. "I just never heard the bell."

Huril repeats, "When it rung, he said he was going to slide five more times."

"No, I never! I just said I was going to slide one more time."

Charles has more energy, varied talent, vocabulary and reasoning power than many children several grades higher. He writes little things of his own volition — sometimes with a streak of poetic observation. ("I like to see the grass wave in the wind.")

It is PTA day. The parents — ours is a monosexual species, one might think from attending a PTA meeting — are to visit the rooms after the meeting to see exhibits of schoolwork.

Charles is on the student program in the study hall. He "recites a piece." He is good and he knows it. He swaggers through it and gets a big hand. Afterward, he comes down to our room with his mother. The women examine the exhibits. I serve a bit of refreshment. The wife of a soldier in Germany is there. She lives next door

to Charles. I am introduced and I admire her little daughter. Charles informs me loudly that the father would like very much to come home. He has been across the ocean for years and years. He has never seen the child.

"Why," Charles adds, elaborating on the poor man's sadness, "I doubt if he's ever seen its mother."

THE BELL rings for books. It is February 14. We discuss valentines some more. Then we have our reading lesson about how Billy Boy and His Friends Shared Their Work. We discuss the division of labor. I ask, "Does President Truman cut his own firewood?"

Charles knows the answer to that. "No'm. He just yells at a wood truck and has 'em back up and throw him off a rick on the porch."

We cut the lessons short and have our spelling so no time will be taken from the party after lunch. Each one puts his pencil away, after writing the words, and checks right or wrong with a colored crayon as I spell the words. I ask, "Who made a hundred?"

Six hands go up. Nora has hers half up and half down. Hesitantly, as I start to put colored stars on the board after the names of the "hundreds," she asks, "Are you going to look at the papers today to see if we really did?"

A knock on the door before I can answer her.

The superintendent and the city police force, Mr. K., are there. Mr.

K. wants Ernest, who hasn't been in school for several days. He has been mixed up in a break-in and some chicken stealing, and is to be returned to the industrial school.

It strikes me terribly hard. I reason with Mr. K. Mr. K. reasons with me. "We're sending him back. Your other pupils will be better off without him."

I admit that.

"Why," Mr. K. declares, "he's taught several kids to smoke that I know about. I don't think kids ought to be let smoke on the way to and from school."

The superintendent and I agree with that, but, he says, his hands are too full now without worrying about a matter for which the children's parents must eventually be responsible. Siding with him, I ask Mr. K. what is to be done when they get the cigarettes from their mothers' packs. Mr. K. does not know.

I give him nineteen cents Ernest won matching pennies in the basement; the previous owners have been unwilling to claim them. He promises to give them to Ernest when he locates him.

I do not go to the cafeteria. My appetite has deserted me.

I AM surprised when Charles tip-toes in after books "take up" at 12:45. It is his birthday and in spite of the big valentine box he had not intended coming back. He had been promised a trip to the veteran's hospital in another town to see his father.

Now he whispers to me that he did not get to go. The doctor is at the house. His grandmother, who has been ill a long time, is slowly dying, and he has been sent back to school. There are many valentines, but it is not a very good party, after all.

SCHOOL is out. A little wearily I tie on my "potato sack" and then I hear feet in the hall. The superintendent speaks from the doorway just as I am wondering if they wouldn't fly around and get someone to take my place if I should quit.

He says, "Well, we have someone to take your place at last!"

I stare at him, somewhat taken aback.

"We'd rather have you stay," he tells me. "We think you're doing the best job we've had in a long time."

Maybe it is polite flattery, but it sounds good — and, either way, here it is, right in my lap: the moment I've been praying for.

"Why," I exclaim, "couldn't I have a day or two to think it over?"

"Just let me know by Saturday."

I know already what my answer will be, though. I walk out upon the schoolground. There is Mary, and her dog that she called the name is with her. She is telling a first grade girl, "No, he won't bite anything but animals."

"Animals?"

"You know — lions and tigers. Animals. That's all he bites — just lions and tigers." She sees me and cries, "He's come after us!"

Sure enough, the car is already here. Mary and I, with our packets of valentines, go up the hill toward it, the dog at our heels.



Phrase Origins — 7

MAN OF STRAW: In ancient Greece there were men who, for a substantial fee, would testify on oath to any "evidence." They wore a straw in their shoes as a badge of their profession. Much later, in England, "professional witnesses" could generally be found in Westminster Hall, London's great court of justice, with the straws of their profession in one shoe. A "man of straw" is therefore a perjured or "manageable" witness, and, in general, an unreliable person.

DAVID T. ARMSTRONG

PIPELINES FOR WAR AND PEACE

BY CHARLES MORROW WILSON

THE transport medium which is making the fastest gains these days is the one least seen and ordinarily least heeded. It is the pressure-operated, long-length metal pipeline. More than any other type of carrier, it presages a new era in industrial and commercial distribution, including perhaps distribution of atomic or nuclear energy.

It is an established fact that pipelines, when operated at or near capacity load, can move an increasing variety of commodities more cheaply, safely and efficiently than any competing carrier. Through them, day and night, frequently without a minute's halt in a year or more, columns of cargo are sucked along by the pulsing urge of pumping stations. The columns move slowly, rarely less than three or more than six miles per hour, but incessantly.

Thus far the United States has been the principal proving ground for pipelines. We have adopted the pipeline as the best carrier for petroleum, for gasoline and other petroleum products, for fuel gas and water. Our

country is veined with about 129,000 miles of trunk pipelines for crude oil, about 245,000 miles of pipelines for natural gas and 17,000 miles of pipelines for gasolines, fuel oils, kerosenes, etc. In addition we have about 225,000 miles of subsidiary lines, running directly from oil and gas wells to refineries, loading stations or seaports. The United States has about 345,000 miles of pipeline mains for water, for the most part municipally owned. The majority of the pipelines for oil or gas are privately owned, although nearly fifty oil or gas pipelines, including the two biggest, are owned by Federal or municipal governments and at least seven are owned by co-operatives.

ACCORDING to Interstate Commerce Commission records, the total tonnages of pipeline transport within the United States continue to double every four to nine years. In 1939 domestic oil pipelines handled 63 billion ton-miles of petroleum and its products. In 1945 they handled about 140 billion ton-miles. The totals are

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climbing because it is cheaper and usually less hazardous to encourage liquids, gases and many pliable solids to move in steady streams within protective pipe walls than to transport them by other means. Also, it is now possible to join thousands of miles of underground pipes and scores of pumping stations into an integrated transport system.

There are other advantages to the use of pipelines as carriers: the direction of flow of pipeline cargoes is readily reversible; several different fluid cargoes can be carried successively or simultaneously in the same line or system of pipe (identical pipelines now carry as many as sixteen different grades of gasoline and fuel oils in successive "slugs" which no longer need be separated by buffer solutions); and pipeline transportation does away with the non-productive, always costly return of the empty container or conveyor.

Efficient pipeline cargoes are not limited to liquids and gases or steam. Experiments are proving that the pressure-operated pipeline is an economic carrier for "modified solids," such as powdered coal and grains. The cost of moving powdered coal via pressure-operated pipeline from a mine location in southern Pennsylvania to New York is seventy-six cents per ton as compared with \$2.56 for the same haul by railroad car. Hundreds of thousands of tons of iron, copper, zinc and other ores are being moved by pressure pipelines from deep mine pits to smelters or

refineries. On Cuban piers one sees millions of gallons of "invert" and other commercial molasses being loaded aboard ship entirely by pipelines. In Liberia the milky latex of natural rubber, one of the most difficult of all cargoes to move without spoilage, is now being moved by pipeline; and Britain's Sierra Leone colony in Africa plans a new mining project for manganese ore, to be carried out of inaccessible jungle areas by the same means.

II

PIPELINES have for some time been important on the international scene. More than one nation has been founded with deliberate intent to provide a right-of-way for oil pipelines. One was the former French protectorate of Syria, through which desert pipelines run from the oil pools of Kirkuk, some seven hundred miles inland in the graveled deserts of Iraq, to Tripoli on the coast. Another is Transjordan, hinterland to the crucial British seaport of Haifa in Palestine, which is the lower terminal of a pipeline which carries oil from Iraq to fill the fuel tanks of Britain's merchant and naval ships. Iran, though not yet precisely a "pipeline state," may very well be on its way to becoming one.

During World War II, roughly two-thirds of the total tonnages of all military goods consumed by our fighting forces were gasoline, fuel oils and other petroleum products, all of which had traveled a decisive part of their

way to war *via* pipelines, without which the essential fuels simply could not have been delivered as required.

At least sixty-five per cent of the fuel oils and gasolines that helped bring an Allied victory moved through big pipelines from Texas, Louisiana, California and Oklahoma fields to the Atlantic, Pacific or Gulf coasts; then it went by tanker to the theatres of operations; and finally surface pipelines carried it from the beachheads to air bases or battle fronts.

OUR four great petroleum states continue to supply a giant's share of the world's petroleum. Oklahoma produces nearly as much oil as did all of prewar Europe, including the Soviet Union. California produces more oil than all of Asia plus the Netherlands Indies and the other South Pacific islands, plus Africa and, for good measure, Rumania. As for Texas, it is far and away the biggest producer of all, the source of almost a third of all petroleum used by man.

But distribution remains the real problem in oil. In our own country thirty-six states are obliged to import most or all of their petroleum needs. Other Western Hemisphere "have-nots" in petroleum supply include Canada; the six nations of Central America; Haiti, Cuba and the Dominican Republic; most of the West Indian islands; and several million square miles of South America, where all the countries except Venezuela and Colombia import petroleum frequently or regularly. All of Europe,

Africa and Asia (excepting the Soviet Union), Australia and most of Oceania are in the "have-not" column in terms of petroleum supply — in an age when petroleum is really our basic source of power. At the same time, the United States, with no more than one-tenth of the world's petroleum reserve (even by the most liberal estimate), continues to furnish about sixty per cent of the world's total production.

For all practical purposes, we are the world's oil pool. But this bizarre situation cannot possibly continue indefinitely. Oil must be produced and distributed as efficiently and fairly as possible to the nations who need it. That is why the oil pipeline has become so important to the hope of peace. Experience has proved that only pipelines can tap the new, usually remotely-situated oil reserves of the world and link them with the refineries and the consumer markets.

III

THE modern pipeline has come a long way since 1821, when William Aaron Hart, a gunsmith of Fredonia, New York, opened America's first natural gas well at a depth of seventeen feet and directed the gas through half-inch lead pipe to light up the local inn. The first champion of pipeline transport of petroleum was Brigadier General Samuel D. Karns of the Pennsylvania militia and later of the Union Army during the American Civil War. Karns had been the proprietor of a salt well at Burning Springs, Pennsyl-

vania. In 1860, when the general's salt well began spouting crude oil, he projected a six-inch pipe to carry the oil downhill to Parkersburg.

In 1864 a New Jersey engineer named J. L. Hutchings invaded the then booming Pennsylvania oil fields to exhibit his invention of a rotary pump capable of forcing crude oil through iron pipe. Unfortunately, the line leaked badly at the joints, spilling several hundred barrels of crude (then worth ten to twenty dollars a barrel) and the inventor's life savings. But that was the beginning of pressure-operated pipelines. By 1877 John D. Rockefeller was buying and combining all available pipeline facilities in the Pennsylvania oil fields, with results known to everyone.

Railroads fought the pipelines bitterly (and still do). Crude-oil teamsters destroyed many of the early lines and railroads repeatedly dispatched locomotive crews to yank out the lines by night. Nevertheless, by 1888 Rockefeller men were finishing the first oil pipeline into New York — from Bradford, Pennsylvania.

The emergence of the automobile age brought American petroleum and oil pipelines into maturity. In 1906 Congress enacted the Hepburn Act recognizing the pipeline as a common carrier. By 1910 crude-oil-pipeline totals had increased to at least 20,000 miles; by 1920 to about 70,000 miles; by 1930 to about 111,000. Steel pipe began to replace cast iron; then came lighter and stronger seamless steel. Rotary pumps driven by oil-burning

or gasoline engines provided greater pressures and efficiency than the earlier steam engines.

By 1914 the mighty Golden Lane oil fields of Mexico's hot Tampico plains were in production and pipelines were moving the crude to markets. During the war years and after pipelines were built in South America, most of them by Americans.

By 1927 the Anglo-Persian Oil Company had "brought in" the Naft-Khnel field of Iraq, and shortly thereafter Iraq Petroleum, owned by British, French, American and Dutch oil companies, opened the great oil pool of Kirkuk. By 1935 the history-making Iraq pipeline was carrying the black gold of Mesopotamia twelve hundred miles across the sand and lava-blocked desert to form a strategic "Y," one arm leading to Haifa, the other to Tripoli.

TODAY the fragile balance of peace for the Middle East continues to rest on a fulcrum of steel pipelines whose pumping stations have long since been converted to forts. As every newspaper reader knows, the Soviets now have enormous oil concessions in northern Iran, matching those of the British in the southern section of the country. The oil lands of the Soviets' Baku, of Saudi Arabia and of American-controlled Bahrein, with total petroleum reserves estimated as at least three times those of the United States, wait for pipelines to permit full exploitation.

In Canada pipelines were begun in

1921, when the Canadian Imperial Oil Company made successful drillings in British Columbia, near the Arctic circle. Nothing but underground pipelines, put down during the brief summer thaws, could carry the oil out to users. When World War II multiplied by at least fifty times the Canadian needs for ship fuels and aviation gasolines, oil companies working with the Canadian government (and in some instances with the United States) built pipelines from Portland, Maine, to Montreal and from Chicago to the Windsor area. There was built also the United States Army's remarkable Canol line to the Arctic.

IV

THE uneasy years that separated two world wars saw at least two hundred oil pipelines built and put to use in far corners of creation: in great mining centers of Australia; in the oil-yielding jungles of Sumatra, Borneo, the Celebes and New Guinea; in the Gran Chaco; in the Venezuelan lake land; in the wilds of Colombia and Brazil; farther and farther into Soviet Russia, where oil experts estimate that the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industries now operates at least 150,000 miles of big diameter pipelines for oil.

Yet even today the story of oil pipelines is still in its genesis. At the same time, it is obvious that the pipeline has grown far beyond the management scope of any one company or industry or nation. Since the early 1930s cooperative associations in the

United States have been building oil lines and putting them to work in interstate distribution. Government ownership of oil pipelines is common in much of South America. Beginning in 1942, the United States government built, renovated and put in work about twelve thousand miles of strategic petroleum pipelines within home boundaries, and an estimated eighty-three thousand miles more at or to eleven different fighting fronts.

The war brought a number of new and important developments in oil pipelines. Shortly after Pearl Harbor our Army developed a portable surface pipeline designed for quick assembly. A quarter-mile of the three-inch pipe-lengths can be loaded in one truck, and simplified pneumatic couplings make it possible for twenty men to assemble or dismantle several miles of pipeline within two hours. One such surface line can deliver as much gasoline as four hundred fuel trucks; it requires only about one-tenth as many man-hours of work and involves a minimum of combat risks.

Our fighting forces built the world's longest (though by no means the biggest) pipeline for gasoline from Calcutta through Assam and North Burma to air bases in Yunnan. On Koli-King Mountain, twelve-thousand feet high in Yunnan, Chinese soldiers chopped oversize stalks of hard bamboo, rammed out the pith with artillery cleaning rods, calked the sections with asphalt and so built the "Bamboo Inch" which carried the water that helped win a crucial

campaign. In Panama our Navy built a giant double-tube pipeline to carry oil that fueled a great part of our mighty Pacific fleets.

IN GENERAL, pipeline developments during World War II merely confirmed on a global scale what pipeline builders had known for twenty years. There were two memorable exceptions to this generality. The first was the laying of twenty three-inch cable lines on the bed of the British Channel to supply gasoline for the invasion of Europe. The other war-born innovation was the Big Inch System, built by the United States government and used to carry oil from the Texas-Louisiana oil pools to the Eastern seaboard. The system comprises two mighty gullets — the Big Inch, twenty-four inches in diameter, for crude oil, and the twenty-inch diameter Little Big Inch for gasolines and other petroleum products. During the last part of the war these two lines moved about eight-billion gallons a year and set the highest standards of efficiency ever known in long-haul transportation. Before they were decommissioned, the two big lines had more than paid for themselves in direct savings of at least \$146,000,000 over railroad-transport cost.

V

USE of the Big Inch System was abandoned within sixty days after V-J Day. There are three possible dispositions to be made of this biggest of

pipeline systems. It can remain idle, to be returned to use in case of another war; otherwise, left to rust and rot. Or its pipelines can be “broken up” into sections and put to various uses by the government. (The obvious drawback to private operation of the entire system is that no one oil company handles enough petroleum to keep the huge lines working efficiently, now that the industry has returned to the routines of peacetime competition.) Or the Big Inch System pipelines could be converted, at an estimated cost of fifty million dollars, to distribute natural gas.

Of these possibilities, perhaps the last is the most impressive. Unmeasured trillions of feet of natural gas are still wasted in the United States, particularly in the Panhandle, East Texas and the Louisiana oil fields. This is one of the most colossal of all American wastes. In general, natural gas is outstandingly high in fuel value and many valuable by-products, including commercial fertilizers and chemicals, can be recovered from it. Also, most of the fuel gas dispensed along the Atlantic seaboard (principally “artificial” gas produced in the conversion of coal to coke) is of poor quality and sold at outrageously high prices — in many instances by monopolies which enjoy political backing. Good natural gas provides about three times as many British Thermal Units (one unit is the heat required to raise the temperature of one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit) per cubic foot as does coal gas and could be delivered

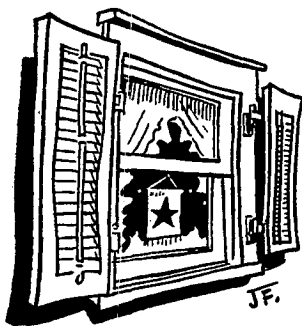
by pipeline for possibly half or one-third of the generally exorbitant gas prices plaguing the industrial East.

The ultimate disposition of the Big Inch pipelines is tied in with the struggle between selfish interest and public good in the field of transportation. To anyone investigating the facts, it is hard to deny that at least some part of pipeline transport belongs in the realm of Federal enterprise if we are to make the best use of many of our resources.

IN A world that continues to starve and fight because of inadequate distribution of essential goods, the use of pipelines for petroleum, fuel gas and water can be but a first step. The past quarter-century has also proved that pipes are the ideal transfer medium

for live steam and heated air, and this may be a step towards the constructive use of atomic energy. Current evidence indicates that nuclear energy could be best distributed as an infinite supply of heat energy *via* pipelines.

That may not be developed for a long time. Meanwhile there are many staple commodities which can be moved great distances by pipeline: cereal grains, syrups and molasses, flour, edible oils and milk; cement, lime, sand, gravel, earth, plastics and many other building materials; coal and commercial ores; bulk plastics, bulk chemicals, wood pulps and weathercoatings. Among these are cargoes that can help weight the scales to plenty, and so to enduring peace.



OUR TASTELESS FOOD

By JOHN C. ROSS

IN MY grandfather's country store there was always an aged long-horn cheese under a rounded glass dome. Every customer was privileged to step behind the counter, lift off the protecting dome and cut himself as many slices as he wished to eat with crackers taken out of the cracker barrel. That kind of store is out of date today, but if some country storekeeper did throw open his cheese stock, how many customers would use the opportunity? The trouble is that that kind of cheese is out of date too, and not simply because wartime restrictions have more or less prevented proper aging. What has happened to cheese has happened to a score of other fine foods and may soon happen to others.

When millions of people in the world are hungry some may consider it unseemly to speak of food that tastes good. On the contrary. A little skill and imagination can go a long way toward making a feast out of fairly unpromising stuff — as many a returning soldier can testify who has been astounded to learn what amazing things the impoverished French can

do with simple soups and gravies..

Americans profess to like good food, yet it seems to be part of our tradition to snicker at people who hunt down an unpretentious little restaurant in some out-of-the-way corner of the city where the service is leisurely and the food excellent. We poke sly fun at the friend who considers cookery an art — especially if he follows it up by action in the kitchen.

We bring up our daughters like queens, in the naïve expectation that each will have her own private chef or at least a cook-of-all-work after she marries her millionaire. It would be presumptuous to suggest that she learn to wield any kitchen utensil more complicated than a frying pan. We are doing our best not to pass on those culinary traditions that we do possess.

II

OUR TRADITION now is that of the can opener, the processed-food container, the mass food processor and the vitamin. Above all, the vitamin. We have enriched breads, irradiated

JOHN C. ROSS is a journalist in the Midwest who came by his love of good food through exposure as a boy to the German traditions of Wisconsin.

milks, added thiamin to this, iron to that, calcium to something else. If we run out of existing vitamins to advertise in our processed foods we set our researchers working to discover new ones. What a noise all this makes! But when we talk about flavor it boils down to approximately the same adjectives: "crispy, crunchy, delicious goodness." We are out of adjectives.

To be sure, our food is certainly cleaner, fresher, more nutritious, more healthful than at any other time or place in the world's history. If we can do all that, why can't we make it taste good, too?

The cult of the can opener seems to be an inevitable development of changing food-distribution patterns. It is furthered by our increasing leisure and by our own cultural attitude toward good food. We have become dependent upon the processed and pre-cooked foods so efficiently and widely distributed in our markets, some of which are fairly good, though many are mediocre and few, if any, exceptionally good. It is easy to see why. In order to attain mass sales the large manufacturer must compromise upon a recipe that will please most people and offend fewest.

The results are hygienic, enriched compounds that are healthy — and tasteless. They are bought by millions who wouldn't eat them if they had any individuality or unaccustomed flavor. They are also beautifully packaged in containers that add far more to the sale and the appetite than the contents ever do.

Like most other industries, the food-processing industry is riding hell-bent down the road leading to the merger of small units into ever larger factories. The nation's 3560 cheese factories averaged only about \$12,000 worth of cheese each in 1909; by 1939 the remaining 2682 were averaging \$40,000 each. Over the same thirty-year span, bakeries decreased nearly a fourth in number but more than tripled the total dollar value of their output. Over a twenty-five-year period, candy factories doubled their dollar output while declining to half their former number.

These instances point up the trend. Food factories are getting smaller in number and larger in size. With the increase in size they command ever larger markets. And as they aim at larger markets they standardize upon mediocrity. A few case histories will show the effect of all this upon our foods.

TIME was when hams were dry-cured thirty days or brine-cured sixty days or more, carefully smoked, and then aged for months, high in the cool rafters of some farm building. Storage of at least eight months was necessary for the enzymes to do their mysterious and wonderful work. The result was a miracle of flavor and texture.

Today's mass-produced hams have their arteries pumped full of salt water, are cured from five days to three weeks, get a few hours of hot smoking and then are sold. The smoking gives them some flavor — at least

on the outside. Their so-called "curing" is a misnomer since they are not treated so as to be preserved, which was the original intent of the curing procedure. They are still so fresh they must be kept under refrigeration until cooked.

A good many of them are "tenderized." This is another word that is competing mightily with "vitamins" for first place in the magic nomenclature which clinches sales. Food merchandisers — they do not call themselves salesmen or advertisers, of course — assume that Americans will sacrifice virtually every other desirable quality in a food if it is (1) pretty enough, (2) tender enough and (3) healthy enough. We want our food soft, and if one result is bad teeth, we hope to make it up with tooth paste.

Country-cured hams are not tenderized. Their curing is partly a dehydration process. One hundred pounds of unprocessed hams weigh 103 pounds when cured, perhaps 96 pounds when smoked and ready for sale. The same original weight of country-cured hams will drop to 70 or 75 pounds after being stored for twelve months. The loss in weight results from evaporation of water.

AND so we see several reasons why we get the hams we do. The country hams take too long to cure. They lose considerable weight in aging. And their flavor is so pronounced that a good many persons, accustomed to mild-cured ham, don't like them. All the influence of the packers is aimed

at accustoming more and more people to mild-cured ham. Those who prefer something else simply have to hope they will be lucky enough to get one of the rare Smithfield and Virginia hams which appear on the market. A few country-cured Tennessee hams, incidentally, have been showing up of late in some markets; these compare favorably with Virginia hams.

I attended a banquet in St. Louis recently at which the main meat course was Missouri country ham. Our host had scoured the countryside for hams which had been smoked in farm smoke-houses and then aged slowly and naturally, high in the rafters of some good-living household.

That ham! At my table sat men from Texas, New York and California. We looked at it reverently as it was set before us. Almost together we sighed — in memory of good things gone. The ham was translucent, almost transparent; its texture was fine and flaky and firmer than ordinary commercial ham. Its aroma filtered up and mixed with our muted conversation. And as the pink mounds on our plates melted away we realized that we were being treated to a rare feast.

We have so far lost the trick of good eating that most people don't even know what aged meat is. How often have you been in a butcher shop and heard a brisk young housewife ask for "some nice fresh steak"? Our Federal Department of Agriculture has done a good job of educating people to buy meat by grade. But that is less than half the battle, because the ferments

that have worked their way through properly-aged meat can turn the veriest utility or commercial grade into something superior to the freshest prime.

III

A LITTLE delicatessen store near our corner bakes wonderful home-made bread twice weekly. The steaming brown loaves are sold as soon as they come from the oven. Yet this store has always sold five times as much commercially-baked bread, and I have seen young women (the same housewives who specify "fresh steak," perhaps) *ask* for commercial bread.

In bread, as in many other foods, we are being educated to a set of highly artificial standards. We are being taught that bread must have an even texture, that it must be feather-light, and that, by all means, it must be "tenderized" or whatever the equivalent is in bread. The result is a handsome golden-brown loaf with all the quality and flavor of baled cotton.

Many state laws require that a loaf of bread have a minimum weight. One object of commercial bakeries, therefore, seems to be to blow a lot of air into their loaves and make them look as big as possible without weighing less than the legal minimum. The fact that the resulting loaf doesn't taste very good seems immaterial. The loaves look big, they are attractively packaged, they keep fairly well. And of course they are "enriched."

This applies mostly to the mass-

distributed bakery bread. Like the delicatessen store on my corner, many smaller bakeries do very well. Their bread retains some of the yeasty flavor that always marked good home-baked bread and which many persons now alive have never tasted. Perhaps this somewhat heavier bread has a few uneven holes and not the cake-like fineness of the commercial "store" loaf. No matter, flavor is what counts.

IV

THE sad case of cheese provides the perfect example of what has been happening to our food. A great deal of what passes as cheese isn't real, but only processed, cheese. The label is quite careful not to call it "cheese" but "cheese food" or something similar. It represents the original raw green cheese which has been ground up, mixed with other milk products, emulsified, cooked and canned or packaged. It is flavored by adding small amounts of stronger cheese but not enough to give it individuality — or it wouldn't sell.

How brightly packaged it is on the shelves, how pleasant to look upon! And how easy is the process of sale! No estimating the thickness of the wedge with expert eye, no unhandy wrapping in two different kinds of paper. Just a neat little eight-ounce rectangle, attractively displayed, simply picked off the counter. There is only one trouble with this system — it doesn't get us good cheese.

A cheese-maker I know claims that

Whenever he has a batch of natural cheese which has been spoiled by milk from a cow having eaten wild onion, he can get rid of it to the processors, many of whom will accept it because small quantities mixed in with big batches of process blends won't be noticeable.

EACH year more and more milk goes into processed, artificially-flavored cheese and less and less into natural cheese. The hundreds of little cheese-makers around the country haven't been able to standardize their products, to package them attractively, or even to age them properly. Present Government limitations making it all but impossible to obtain aged natural cheese haven't helped the situation.

In the heart of Wisconsin's "domestic Swiss" cheese country some time ago, a friend of mine who wanted some good aged cheese was directed by a villager, not to the nearest cheese factory, but to a tavern whose proprietor bought the green wheels from the factory and aged them himself. That cheese was as far from the ordinary rubbery stuff that is sold in the markets for "domestic Swiss" as Switzerland itself. The villager had no doubt that the local factory couldn't do as well.

V

IS IT too much to say that with hundreds of fundamentally wonderful things to eat, with the produce of the whole world available for our

tables, Americans don't know what good food is? We must be the only country in the world where knowledge of cooking is the last talent required of a man or woman launching that traditional token of free enterprise — the family restaurant. Millions who eat in these tens of thousands of dismal grills, with their thick-crusted bakery pies, their cotton bread, their grease-steeped foods, cannot be acquainted with anything better.

I think it was de Tocqueville who observed that God gave the Americans an abundance of good food but the Devil spoiled it by giving them the frying pan. Evidently our national unconcern for good-tasting food was evident to that keen-eyed Frenchman more than a century ago. Perhaps it is a necessary part of our history; the pioneers had neither the time nor the materials to be fussy and they have left us with the careless eating traditions which, even though we now have both time and food in abundance, we may be generations outgrowing.

Millions of young Northern boys spent months in Southern training camps during the war to discover, among other things, that "good Southern cooking" is a widespread exaggeration — to put the best possible face on it. Millions of city boys stationed in rural Army bases learned the same sad facts about "country cooking." One might consider the cause utterly hopeless were it not for the fact that this wistful mythology does exist. Perhaps our myth of good food

elsewhere — in the South, in the country, in the big city (where it is most apt to be found, incidentally) — is like all other dreams of promised lands for which we yearn.

MAYBE we do want good food after all. If so, the job of re-education is quite possible individually. Most food stores are sharply limited in the quality of goods they offer but on a recent tour through one of the better chain stores I took note of the following kinds of natural cheese it was possible to buy there: goat cheese, domestic Swiss, Münster, May, Edam, Port du Salut, domestic Bleu, Bond-Ost, Chantelle, Gorgonzola, Romano, and yellow and white cheddar. This store is an exception, I admit, but it does exist and a few of these cheeses were quite good. They were confined to a comparatively small section of the cheese counter, the major part of which was taken up with a gay and seductive display of approximately thirty kinds of processed cheese, many of them suitably labeled "mild."

The problem is to learn what is best. This same store had fat sausages which were not in demand except by the foreign-born customers for whom they were intended. Thuringer, Braunschweiger, salami, Polish, chili rolls, blood and barley rings — many of them would be an amazing treat to hundreds of restless women waiting in the meat line.

We are great coffee drinkers. The well-known brands are highly advertised, attractively packaged, extremely

fresh from the roaster. The packages and the names are easy to sell. But again, this is mass-production coffee blended to a mass taste. I remember a store in a large city which sold at retail more than sixty varieties of coffee. The good German-American burghers of the city came, each with his own formula which would be specially blended and ground to his order. No one seems to have time for anything like that any more; our tastes have grown increasingly regimented under the advertised pressures to conform.

ANOTHER general American characteristic is our ignorance of spices. Garlic is used with a heavy hand or not at all — and often is not even available. But garlic salt is omnipresent. Indicative of our befuddled attitude toward spices, I think, is the situation in one mighty store where, by my actual measurement, twenty-one feet of space three shelves deep were devoted to a display of several brands of prepared mustard and an equal amount of space was given over to vinegar. Yet only three feet of an adjoining counter were given over to nineteen other true spices, including ground mustard, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, sage, mace, anise seed, turmeric and curry powder; I could find no marjoram, thyme or bay leaves. To most Americans, nearly all these spices — sage, nutmeg and clove excepted — are quite unfamiliar and dangerously experimental.

Good food does remain a pleasant tradition with many individual fam-

es, with some foreign-born groups, and in certain rural areas. It also tends to be so with the well-to-do who are exposed to better food in expensive restaurants and in traveling, and who are able to go to greater pains and expense to satisfy the tastes they develop. But it is a mistake to imagine that anyone with imagination and curiosity cannot have the advantage of countless good things to eat.

Truffles? No, they must always be expensive. Caviar? Russian caviar will never be cheap, but some very good American caviar can be bought for 10 cents an ounce. It's whitefish and why shouldn't you develop a taste for it? But the problem goes a lot deeper. Most of us always order the same orange pekoe tea because it is familiarly packaged and the spider leg and Formosa oolong come in bulk. We buy disintegrating canned shrimp because we can't bear the nuisance of cooking, shucking and cleaning fresh ones. It is even possible to buy canned hash, thus simulating leftovers!

VI

NOT ALL of the blame can be put upon the food processors: the sin of sloth is within ourselves. If we're too lazy to cook potatoes, who can blame the astute merchandiser for canning them? But lest the processor get off too easily, let's remind him that our buckwheat flour is only part buckwheat and our mince meat contains no meat.

Indeed, not all of the trends are

against us. Fresh vegetables are coming into their own as they never have before because of the rapidly increasing processes of quick-freezing and air transportation. The former already is, the latter soon will be, revolutionizing and, incidentally, rapidly improving the marketing of vegetables and fruits. Anything that has an advantage in being sold fresh will benefit from these developments.

We can ourselves do much to widen our food horizons. We buy a canned cherry jelly that is as good as any mother ever made — and we jot down the brand name. We find a sausage that is first-rate. We contact a small town butcher who will send us his cured hams. We get on the mailing list of the Wisconsin tavern owner who cures Swiss cheese. We scout about for home-baked bread. We find wonderful foods — cheeses and breads and pastries especially — in some foreign neighborhoods of our big cities. With a little imagination and work we can do pretty well.

We are aided by alert small merchants. Rural producers sometimes spot the need and seek to remedy it. A cheese store opens in a big city and encourages a top-notch market. A country processor begins to smoke turkeys and finds a surprising sale. A soldier home from France encourages his new wife to attend cooking school. A fine little restaurant inspires emulation. If more and more people pay attention to such things, our can openers could soon become relics, consigned to the attic forever.

ROBBING THE STEAM CARS

BY STEWART H. HOLBROOK

FOLKLORE being what it is, it is only natural that most Americans believe that Jesse James and his goons invented train robbery, for Jesse, like Casey Jones and Buffalo Bill Cody, attracted a large number of biographers and balladists who have constantly added to his reputation these many years past.

Nothing could be further from the truth than the allegation that Jesse invented train robbery; and while only a man of great rashness would hazard to name America's first train robber, the first formal holdup of a string of steam cars was accomplished on October 6, 1866 by a crew of Hoosiers. The incident occurred on the Ohio & Mississippi Valley Railroad near Seymour, Jackson County, Indiana.

This first stickup was a simple job. In early evening, as the passenger train pulled out of Seymour, heading east, two masked men came into the express car from the coach just behind. They secured the messenger's keys, opened his safe, took out some \$13,000, then pulled the bell cord to stop the train. They dumped another unopened safe out the door, leaped after it, and disappeared. It was a clean and successful operation. Somewhat later, and for sufficient reasons, two brothers

named John and Simeon Reno were arrested for the crime. Still later they were hanged by vigilantes, and thus died the founding fathers of a typically American institution that was to flourish for the next half century and more.

With the death of the Reno boys there came a hiatus in train robbery; then, in 1870, it broke out like a rash, in Kentucky, in Tennessee, in Nevada. Pinkertons promptly began specializing in the new profession, and worked most ably, breaking up half a dozen gangs who had been operating on the railroads. They were even called to the effete East, for a thug held up and robbed an express car on the staid Boston & Albany, electrifying all New England, which had theretofore encountered its bandits vicariously in the pages of Mr. Beadle's Dime Library.

THE James and Younger gang did not enter the field of the steam cars until 1873, when the technique had been all but perfected. On July 21 they stopped a Rock Island train near Adair, Iowa. Folklore has it that the great Jesse was "kind to his mother and to little children." So, no doubt, he was; that is, except to little chil-

dren who happened to be on the trains he and his thugs wrecked in order to rob. That was the way they stopped the Rock Island cars at Adair. As this particular train sped across the hot summer prairie that sultry evening, Engineer Rafferty, an excellent man, was at the throttle, his eye on the track, his heart glad that the grain harvest was to be good for the struggling farmers. The tall wheat and the towering corn fled by in the falling twilight, waving in the soft Iowa breeze. All seemed well ahead. The shining rails stretched out, true and level, beyond the beam of the great headlight. Then came a curve, and as they rounded it Rafferty's fireman saw a rope tauten, then a rail slide out of place. He shouted warning. Rafferty threw his engine into reverse, but there wasn't time. Over keeled the locomotive on its side, crushing poor Rafferty to death — leaving four orphans of Jesse James' making. Several cars also left the rails.

The Rock Island holdup was small, around \$4000. Off and on the James and Younger gorillas continued to wreck and rob trains, sometimes shooting the cars full of holes just for the hell of it, and always displaying a complete and hideous disregard for human life. They did not meet their match until they tried to rob a bank in Northfield, Minnesota, a place not to be trifled with. The rustics of Northfield shot three of the yahoos dead in the street and wounded and captured three more. This affair really wrecked the gang. They were never the same

after, even though they stuck up another Rock Island train in 1881, and brutally and needlessly shot and killed two members of the train crew. Less than a year later Bob Ford fired the shot that put Jesse and himself into folklore and made a nice customer for the morticians of St. Joseph, Missouri.

Several decades of journalists magnified Jesse James and, to a lesser extent, Cole Younger to such heroic size that even the professors came to hear of them. So Frank and Cole went into the *Dictionary of American Biography*. So, too, did Sam Bass, another robber of the steam cars, who, unlike Jesse, never tried to rationalize his thuggery but admitted he wanted money to spend on race horses, faro banks, painted whores and other necessities. Bass was never much of a train robber, but he died in Texas, his boots on, and some lad down there put him into what is unquestionably the most dreadful ballad ever written, all sixty verses of it. The sentimental and gun-loving Texans erected a neat gravestone to Sam with a characteristic epitaph: "A Brave Man Reposes Here: Why Was He Not True?" In the Lone Star State today, if one is not careful, one is likely to be shown as many as 146 different revolvers, each and all certified as being the gun last carried by the illiterate thug.

II

I REGRET exceedingly that neither Christopher Evans nor John Sontag rate a sketch in the classic *D.A.B.*

above-mentioned. They belong there more than does Sam Bass and are as fitted for its chaste pages as James and Younger. Evans and Sontag had a deep and, to them and to many another, a very proper motivation for the robberies which they executed on the Southern Pacific Railroad and nowhere else. That is, if they ever committed any robberies at all. Theirs is indeed a curious case. Neither was ever convicted of robbery, and although I happen to believe they staged five bold and quite efficient stickups of S.P. trains, there is many a Californian today who will swear that the two men were hounded to prison or death merely because they opposed and agitated against a powerful railroad corporation. Whatever Evans and Sontag were or weren't, they were assuredly the most indestructible human beings I can think of—offhand or after long deliberation.

TO COMPREHEND the cold, undying hate that appears to have powered Chris Evans, it is necessary to know a little something about the Southern Pacific Railroad of the last quarter of last century. The Road's policy was to create and maintain a monopoly in California and more, to exact from that monopoly "the utmost possible profit," as even a friendly historian put it.

In building or acquiring its lines southward from San Francisco through the San Joaquin Valley in the 1870s, the S.P. was subsidized by Federal land grants. The S.P. land office put on a

campaign to get settlers on these lands, even before they had been surveyed and the titles validated. It announced to these settlers that as soon as the grant was legally clear, the settlers could buy their acres at from \$2.50 to \$10 an acre. The settlers swarmed in. They found a country more desert than anything else, but they did not give up; they went to work digging their own irrigation canals and building dams. Their labors changed the forlorn sterility into a kind of lush paradise.

When the S.P. at last received its titles to the grant, however, it offered the lands for sale, not at the agreed price but at twenty-five to forty dollars per acre. The long-suffering settlers were naturally alarmed and angry. They appealed to the Company. No answer. They formed a Settlers' Rights League and engaged lawyers to attack the Railroad's right to the titles. Their case was defeated in the local Federal courts, and the League appealed direct to the Interior Department. Interior favored the Railroad, which thereupon ordered off its lands all settlers who had not paid cash at S.P. prices.

The settlers refused to move. The Railroad sent a United States marshal and deputies into the Mussel Slough region to start dispossessing the farmers. Shooting began, and when the smoke cleared two officers and five farmers lay dead. But the evictions were carried out. Five farmers were sent to jail for the riot. The Settlers' Rights League, of which

Chris Evans was a member, gave up the battle.

The fine acres Evans had brought to bloom, his house and barn and other improvements, all went to the Railroad. Impoverished as he was, with a sizable family to support, the poison of bitterness crept into the introspective soul of this ex-Vermonter. Nevertheless, he went to work with a will, grading grain, then becoming superintendent of grain warehouses in Goshen and Pixley. (Mark those names; they were soon to be in the news.) The record of his subsequent movements reads like this: After he left his warehouse job he went to Modesto where he opened a lively stable. (Mark the name of Modesto.) The stable soon burned down, with most of the animals in it. Evans gave up trying to be a businessman. Taking his family, he finally moved to Tulare County, on a small tract of rented land near Visalia.

Now as for John Sontag: where he and Evans met isn't known. Sontag was a tall, rugged man from Mankato, Minnesota, a sort of boomer railroadman, who had been badly injured while working for the Southern Pacific. He claimed that neglect of his injury, in the Railroad's hospital, had left him maimed for life. He walked with a limp. He was as bitter for this reason as Evans was for his lost acres.

Things began happening to Southern Pacific trains on the cloudy evening of February 22, 1889. As Number Seventeen pulled out of Pixley,

two masked men climbed over the coal and into the cab. At point of gun the engineer stopped the train. The two robbers now shouted to the man in the express car to throw out the safe. Messenger Kelly refused. "Very well," said the shorter of the two robbers, a man about as tall as grain inspector Evans. He placed a charge of dynamite under the car. It lifted the car off the rails. But Kelly still refused to deliver the safe. Whereupon the robbers announced they would kill both engineer and fireman unless the safe came out. Out it came. Meanwhile the rest of the train crew had been milling around. One of the bandits shot and killed a trainman named Gabert. Then they ordered the train to move on. Taking the safe, which contained around \$5000, the masked men disappeared in the brush.

Eyewitnesses agreed there were but two men, one short, one tall. No identification was made. No one in particular was suspected. Chris Evans, warehouse foreman, continued to grade the wheat and barley at Pixley. Almost a year later, this time near Goshen, where Evans inspected grain, another holdup of an S.P. train was accomplished by two men using virtually the same technique as at Pixley, except that this time no shooting occurred and the haul was a thumping \$20,000. The Railroad's detectives converged on the scene, but found never a clue, nor any sympathy from citizens who jeered at them as hirelings of what was soon to be known in California as The Octopus.

Early in February of 1891, old Number Seventeen was held up a second time, again near Pixley, but there was no profit, for Messenger C. C. Haswell defied the robbers and started shooting at them through the grating of his side door. The police had no clues, but somebody simply had to be arrested. Two goats were handy. They were Bill and Gratton Dalton, already notorious in the Midwest, who were apparently hiding out in the San Joaquin Valley for some Kansas crime.

CONVICTED on general principles, rather than on evidence, Grat Dalton was sent to jail for train robbery. While he was still in jail, the two S.P. robbers struck again, this time near Modesto — a town, perhaps not incidentally, to which Chris Evans had recently moved to open a livery stable. (To finish the story of the Daltons: Grat quietly walked out of his cell in one of the easiest jail deliveries of record, then went back to Kansas to die in the raid on Coffeyville little more than a year later.) The Modesto attack was much like the others. The bandits got away clean, though without any cash.

At about this time Evans' stable in Modesto burned, and he moved to Visalia. A year passed, then good old Number Seventeen was held up again, this time just out of Fresno. The routine was much the same, and the robbers went away with 125 pounds of silver coin.

By now detectives for Wells-Fargo,

the express people, and for the Southern Pacific were desperate. They joined forces and in two days arrested more than fifty "suspects," among whom was a mouthy dude named George Sontag, who hung around Visalia poolhalls and saloons and liked to talk loudly about what a cruel monster the Southern Pacific was. Detective Will Smith of the S.P. questioned Sontag, who became confused and made contradictory statements about his brother, John. Learning that John was staying at the Chris Evans ranch near town, Detective Smith and Deputy Witty drove out there. They found both Evans and John Sontag, all right. When the smoke blew away Witty, badly hit, was down in the road in front of the house; Smith, mildly wounded, was running fast for town and more help; and Evans and John Sontag were getting into the officers' buggy and driving off.

III

CALIFORNIA's biggest manhunt began right after Detective Smith, bleeding like a stuck hog, got back to Visalia. It was to last a year and a half. Some 3000 men were to engage in it, and it was to end only with the death of John Sontag, by then virtually weighted with lead, and the capture of Evans minus an eye, an arm, and scarred and pitted beyond recognition.

From the Evans home the two men drove toward the Sierras, hid, and permitted a large posse of mounted men to gallop by. Then the outlaws re-

turned to the Evans ranch, enjoyed a substantial supper, and proceeded to load up the buggy with provisions for a long stay in the mountains. Just as they were about to leave, deputies came up. It was too dark to see much, but both sides started shooting and Deputy Beaver was killed. Evans and Sontag drove away into the hills.

MEANWHILE the mouthy George Sontag had been convicted, on almost no evidence whatever, of having had a part in the last train robbery. He was sent to Folsom Prison. At the instigation of her father, who was never long out of touch with his family, Eva Evans, oldest daughter, with some help from sympathizers, planned a prison delivery for George Sontag. Just how it was arranged isn't clear, but on June 27, 1893, Sontag and three other convicts who were working in the rock quarry of the prison, suddenly picked guns out of thin air and opened fire on their guards. The attempt looked good only for a moment. Guards shot them all down, killing all but Sontag who was crippled for life.

Meanwhile, too, Evans and John Sontag were holding out in fine shape. Once, maybe twice, they drove to the Evans home near Visalia, and once were put to the trouble of shooting their way through a cordon of officers who had surrounded the place. Mostly, though, they stayed in the hills, and there they lived very well, eating at logging camps, where no questions were asked, and with miners. The

United States government and the Southern Pacific put a small army of marshals and deputies into the region. Two Indian trackers were engaged. So was a pack of bloodhounds. The woods were filled with armed men, at best a dangerous condition; and when the vigilantes used whiskey to spur their courage and their efforts, they took to shooting at each other. At least eleven deputies were wounded by other deputies. The S.P. and Wells, Fargo & Company combined to offer \$10,000 reward for capture of the two men, and indicated they did not care if the men were alive at the time of capture.

At a place called Young's Cabin, Evans and Sontag were almost taken by a posse. They shot their way out of it. A bit later came a terrific battle at Stone Corral, where United States Marshal George Gard and a posse lay in ambush. The officers were well hidden in a cabin. As soon as Evans and Sontag came into range, one of the more nervous deputies opened fire. The two outlaws dropped down behind a pile of straw and manure and there for the next several hours put up a battle that was likened by excitable newspapermen to that of the Alamo.

First, Sontag got a bullet through his right arm. Then Evans' left arm was practically shot off, and hung uselessly. Two more big slugs got Sontag in his side. Another bullet went through his body, chest high. Now a charge of buckshot caught Evans fair in the head, tearing out his right eye.

The two men continued to shoot whenever any officer showed any part of his body; bullets continued to thud into the ground around the besieged bandits.

Evans attempted to patch up his partner, now bleeding pretty much all over. Both men had to load and fire with one arm. Evans got another bullet, this time in his right shoulder. The outlaws' fire had not been very effective, only one of the officers being hit.

DARK came on. Gard and his men, knowing the outlaws to be wounded, prepared to wait out the night. Sontag got so weak he could not lift a hand; and as dusk deepened, Evans started to creep away into the nearby woods. The officers detected the move and all hands opened fire. Evans somehow managed to shoot back once, then disappeared. As for Sontag, he died slowly, painfully, on the straw, and at dawn, when the posse cautiously approached, they found him breathing his last, heaving blood at every breath. His body was taken to Visalia where a doctor said he had never seen a human being so riddled with lead.

Up in the hills, as soon as he had reached the cover of night and the woods, Evans plodded on. His clothing soaked with blood, both arms hanging at his sides, one of them mere strips of flesh and bone, and with three buckshot embedded in his head, he started a journey that Carl B. Glasscock, historian of outlaws, termed an "amazing instance of human en-

durance and will power." Stumbling through the dark of a mountain night, Evans traveled six miles through deep and rough woods to reach a cabin occupied by a Perkins family. From here, where he lay in bed, white from loss of blood, he sent a Perkins boy to Sheriff Kay in Visalia with word that he, Evans, was prepared to give himself up without more ado, on condition that the reward for his capture should go to Mrs. Evans. Officers came to carry him out. In jail his left arm was amputated. He was tried and found guilty, not of train robbery, but of the murder of one of the posse in a battle near Evans' home.

THE trial was held in Fresno, and right after its end came the big sensation that brought extras tumbling out of the presses all along the West Coast. EVANS FLEES JAIL, said the headlines. It was true, too. Before he could be moved to prison a gun was smuggled to him in the Fresno jail. With it he forced the jailer to let him out; then, with an accomplice named Ed Morrell, he took to the hills.

It was an amazing escape of California's favorite criminal-hero. The newspapers went into ecstasies. Farmers of the Mussell Slough region and, yes, the farmers everywhere along the S.P. lines let go whoops of joy. The chase began all over again. Again the hills crawled with deputies. Again the hounds bayed. Handicapped with an artificial arm, blind in one eye, the outlaw seemingly had no difficulty keeping out of the hands of the posses.

The officers apparently gave up the idea of ever taking Evans by force. So they sent a faked message through an intermediary to the effect that one of Evans' daughters was seriously ill and was pleading to see her father.

It worked. Evans came home at once and there was captured by a posse large enough to have stormed a fort.

Chris Evans went to Folsom Prison in 1894 to serve a life sentence. In 1911 he was paroled by Governor Hiram Johnson, a man who had no great love for the Southern Pacific Railroad. Evans and family moved to Portland, Oregon, where he lived quietly and spent much time on a bench in the Park Blocks, often in company with an old acquaintance, Frank Coulter, whom Evans had known in the Modesto days many years before. "Evans," the late Mr. Coulter told me, "was a soft-spoken and genial sort of man. He had plenty of intelligence. It was hard for me to look at him, to hear

him talk, and to think that this was the man who had successfully defied the Southern Pacific and the state of California — at that time almost the same thing — for so many years, and took on the United States government to boot. No other man than Evans required such an army to take him, and Evans, remember, was taken only by fakery of the worst sort — playing on his love for his family. I came to know the man well and to like and respect him. He never so much as intimated he had ever robbed a train."

EVANS died in 1917, in Portland, the last of the old school of great train robbers. (Cole Younger had died two years before.) He remains pretty much unknown to this day, except on the Pacific Coast and to experts in the history of robbers and robbery. I could wish that the editors of the *Dictionary of American Biography* would hear of him.



Can You Answer These Questions About CANCER?

Q. Are we winning or losing the war on cancer?



A. The news is good! The death rate from cancer of the stomach, skin, and mouth is going down. Among women the rate is being reduced for *all* forms of cancer.

Q. How is medical science attacking cancer?

A. Doctors are treating more patients in the early stages of cancer when the chances of cure are greatest. Intensive studies are now being carried on to determine the causes of cancer and to develop new methods of diagnosis and treatment. These include research with hormones and experiments with radio-active substances and certain chemical compounds.



Q. Is there any new "sure cure" for cancer?



A. No! Medical scientists say that there are still only two ways of curing cancer: complete *removal* by surgery or complete *destruction* by X-rays or radium rays. There is *no other way* known at present.

Q. What should *everyone* do about cancer?

A. First, learn the *danger signals*. Second, when such warnings appear, *get medical advice immediately*. It is estimated that 30 to 50 percent of the deaths from cancer today might have been prevented by earlier recognition and prompt treatment.



Q. What are cancer's "danger signals"?

1. Any unusual lump or thickening, especially in the breast. 2. Any irregular or unexplained bleeding. 3. A sore that does not heal, particularly about the mouth, tongue, or lips. 4. Noticeable changes in a mole or wart. 5. Loss of appetite or continued unexplained indigestion. 6. Any persistent changes in normal habits of elimination.

Important note: These signals do *not necessarily* mean cancer. In fact, 88 out of 100 women who came to one cancer clinic proved *not* to have the disease. However, the signals do indicate that something is wrong which you should have checked by your physician. His examination will reassure you if cancer is not present, or, if it is, will permit prompt treatment.

To learn more about cancer, send for Metropolitan's free booklet, 106-L, "There Is Something YOU Can Do About Cancer."

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A LAUREL WREATH FOR SIMEON FORD

BY STANLEY WALKER

IN THE old days in New York, before the time of paid public speakers, before the coming of the cheap wise-crackers and professional gag men, before ghost writers, before the invention of the ubiquitous microphone, and before rubberized, broiled chicken became popular, the art of after-dinner speaking was justly esteemed as a high and gentlemanly art. One of the ablest practitioners thereof was Simeon Ford, a hotelkeeper of funereal countenance, who was one of the sliest and wisest and wittiest of men.

He said so many good things that it is difficult to select the best of them. But there was one remark which I always cherished, the one in which he deprecated his ability as a forensic artist. He said: "I never was any good as an after-dinner speaker. It was just that everybody was so astounded that a hotelkeeper could get up and say a few sentences in English that could be understood. And I suppose it was pretty marvelous, at that. I mean a hotelkeeper being

able to talk anything but gibberish."

And then there was another line which he pulled in a speech at a farewell dinner given in his honor at the old Waldorf-Astoria in 1914. Mr. Ford had just sold his Grand Union Hotel on Forty-second Street for \$3,000,000; this hotel, he said, "had been the haven for so many hayseeds who came across the street from the Grand Central Terminal because they were terrified of hack drivers." The fine old hotel was to be torn down to make way for a new subway station. Mr. Ford, perceiving that evil days were on their way, and remembering something of the past glories of his hotel, said: "Simeon Ford may have sinned, but he never charged the public for bread and butter."

SIMEON FORD retired from hotel-keeping and public speaking at the same time, and went to live in Rye, up on Long Island Sound. Though he kept in touch with a few old friends, the world of oratory and wit saw him no more, and a new generation quickly

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arose which has never heard of him. I happened to know Mr. Ford, and I loved him deeply.

This darling old clown of the banquet halls was no ordinary fly-by-night jester. He had the deep brooding moods of a philosopher; he was a genuine scholar; he knew much about art, and the paintings and prints which once adorned his hotel are now treasured in many museums and private collections; he knew the wisdom of cynicism, and he had a candid hatred of bunk.

Simeon Ford has been described as a sort of postprandial Will Rogers of an earlier era; he called himself "a survivor of the early Victorian, pitcher-and-bowl, don't-blow-out-the-gas type of boniface." He was well over six feet tall, bearded and extraordinarily melancholy of mien; but a mordant wit lay behind that façade and his sharp mind was capable of toying with a wide variety of subjects. He held his own in the glorious days when his chief colleagues at after-dinner jousts were such men as Joseph H. Choate, the brilliant lawyer who was once Ambassador to the Court of St. James; General Horace Porter, a Civil War veteran who was never at a loss for the apt phrase; the fabulous Chauncey M. Depew, former United States Senator, always polished and urbane; Job E. Hedges, a man with a brain full of firecracker aphorisms who would have been elected Governor of New York if he had not been so amusing (the public, then as now, distrusted witty men in public office

and pinned its faith on the pompous dullards), and Patrick Francis Murphy, the handsome Celt who was head of the leather goods firm of Mark Cross.

THERE were others, too, some about Ford's own age and some a bit younger — Bourke Cockran, the pride of Tammany Hall, who had a face like an Irish king's; Willie Collier, the actor who died only a year or so ago in California; Rennold Wolf, the playwright; Augustus Thomas, the square-faced author of plays, who also dabbled in politics; and Wilton Lackaye, the veteran actor whose owlish appearance masked a keen and puckish wit. Jimmy Walker, who attained some fame as a turner of the deft phrase, was a mere youngster when these men were going strong. I may be prejudiced against the whole crop of newcomers, but I much preferred the old-timers. They were old men and I was a kid breaking into New York, but I heard them all, and some of them I came to know well. Down with the moderns!

Simeon Ford, a few years before he died, gave me what sounds like a sensible explanation for the sad decline of the art of after-dinner speaking. My own explanation is that the character and quality of the speakers, as men and thinkers, have gone downhill. But he was a bit more charitable when he said:

"Back in the old days there would be only four or five dinners a year where there were any speeches. They

would be held in Delmonico's, where you couldn't seat more than 250 guests in the banquet hall, and everybody could hear. The hosts would have Joe Choate or Horace Porter or Job Hedges or Pat Murphy — all men with something to say and a gift for saying it.

"But nowadays at public dinners, the guests run into the thousands. The speakers are generally professionals with no personality and no color. If you see them at all they are just little specks away off on the horizon — and those microphones are awful. Why, if old Joe Choate himself were to make the most beautiful speech of his life through one of them, it would sound chilly."

II

LIKE so many men with first-rate minds, Simeon Ford was born in Indiana — in Lafayette on August 31, 1855. He passed his boyhood in Windham County, Connecticut, and then his family moved to Brooklyn.

"Which makes me," he used to drawl, "one-half rube, one-half yap, with a strain of gazabo thrown in. My first jobs were clerking in a boot store and selling drygoods. Then I worked in a law office and had visions of myself on the Supreme Court bench, but I fell in love and that changed everything. I was yanked into the hotel business from the top, so to speak, because I married the proprietor's daughter."

Probably Simeon Ford was at his

best when describing his experiences as proprietor of the Grand Union Hotel. Once, at a dinner in honor of Joseph Jefferson, the actor, he said:

"I am the proud possessor of perhaps the largest collection of actors' trunks extant. In most cases, a vacuum is the contents of an actor's trunk left with a landlord as collateral for unpaid board. I haven't one of Mr. Jefferson's trunks, however. I wish I had, for then I could say with Shakespeare's Lucius: 'Draw you near to shed obsequious tears upon this trunk.'"

Again, talking of his hotelkeeping years, Simeon Ford said:

"Nowadays, if you lodge a man for a dollar he comes down and expostulates if he doesn't have a grand piano in his room. It has been my experience that no matter how far above reproach his conduct elsewhere may have been, a hotel patron considers it perfectly moral to borrow anything that strikes his or her fancy about the place and smuggle it out. It is always a source of gratification to me when I reflect upon the hundreds of happy homes which I have helped to beautify, and the many festive boards throughout the land adorned with linen and silver inscribed with the beautiful motto: 'Grand Union Hotel.' Undergraduates who come to New York for the Yale-Princeton football game are particularly adept borrowers and annually go through our hotel like locusts through a farm. Recently we discovered one young gentleman had cut holes through the center of the blankets on his bed so

that he could insert his head through them and wear them out under his overcoat.

"We landlords are always striving to oblige, however. There was the case of the boniface of a seaside resort who came out on his front porch just in time to see one of the guests far out in the ocean going down for the third time. Noticing the guest's right hand outstretched with the fingers spread wide, the landlord went to the bar and soon returned with a tray bearing five beers. That was accommodation for you.

"Suicides are a comparatively easy trade to satisfy. Give a guest so disposed a good gas burner six feet above the floor, about 1500 feet of illuminating gas at a dollar a thousand, and a few uninterrupted moments, and he is content. When I first went into this business, Mr. Garrison, my employer, after studying my peculiarly lofty construction and my *dolce far niente* architecture for a few moments, said: 'Well, young man, you have one attribute that will come in handy in this business. You have an ideal build for crawling over a transom and opening the door in case there is a suicide in the room.'

"Once a young groom complained because some busybody had told him that the room he was occupying with his bride had been the scene of a recent suicide. I told him: 'My dear young man, please accept our apologies because we haven't had time to put a silver plate and a pair of coffin handles on the door.' But nowadays

the height of hotel prices so takes the breath away that a suicide can't blow out the gas."

THROUGHOUT his career as boss of the Grand Union Hotel, Simeon Ford brought his native common sense and his gift for acidulous comment to bear on public controversies — this in marked contrast to most modern hotelkeepers, who are afraid to speak their minds on anything, even if they happen to have any opinions worth expressing. Simeon Ford, like many other honest men, was indignant at the passage of the Raines Law, which forbade saloons to serve liquor on Sundays but permitted hotels to do so if food were ordered with the wet goods. As a result, many saloons converted themselves into hotels. Said Mr. Ford:

"It is easy to create a hotel nowadays, for all you need is a microscopic bedroom or two and a cuisine consisting of a half-dozen indestructible, celluloid, patent, flyback sandwiches guaranteed to stand the ravages of time and not to soil, crack, split or mould. This law was made in the interests of temperance, and, like most moves along that line, is rapidly tending to make inebriates out of the community at large."

A large part of the public, knowing Mr. Ford only by his fame as a witty after-dinner speaker, thought of him as a mere funny man and nothing more. Actually he was much more than that; he was a shrewd hotel operator, a sound judge of real estate,

and an all-around good business man. Few men appreciated food more than he, and there are a few dodderers still alive — not many, more's the pity — who remember the Grand Union's oyster bar and the wonderful roast beef served at the free lunch counter. Moreover, although Mr. Ford might draw heavily upon his misadventures with his customers for his after-dinner remarks, he was a friend of those customers, and knew all his regular ones by name.

After his retirement Mr. Ford played a little golf, indulged in a bit of genteel yachting on Long Island Sound, and talked occasionally to old friends, but for the most part he merely sat back and watched the world slowly and insistently go to pot with the coming of Prohibition, the debasing of the New York amusement district, the decay of courtesy and urbanity, and the degeneration of the public's eating habits. Gradually he drifted away from the attention of all but the closest associates.

III

IT WAS early on the afternoon of August 30, 1933 that, for no apparent reason, I happened to think of old Simeon Ford, who had been lost to the public for nineteen years. His wife, Mrs. Julia Ellsworth Ford, was well known as a crusader against hay fever, and his daughter, Miss Lauren Ford, had achieved considerable note as an illustrator for children's books, but old Simeon himself had been

more or less sidetracked into oblivion, a relic of another and more gracious era.

At that time I was city editor of the New York *Herald Tribune*, and on this particular afternoon I was having some difficulty thinking up enough assignments to keep the staff busy. Checking with our library, I found that the next day, August 31, would be the seventy-eighth birthday of the old after-dinner champion. On the staff then was John Lardner, oldest son of Ring Lardner, a tall, handsome, dark, shy young fellow who was just breaking into the newspaper business. He was good even then, but inexperienced and somewhat lacking in that debonair manner which he has today. I suggested he might be able to get a good story out of Simeon Ford.

"Tomorrow is his birthday," I said. "He is a fine old man, and he may have something on his mind. The times have more or less passed him by, but he was a great man in his day. Anyhow, suppose you go up to Rye and see him. He will think of something to make a story, even if you can't. He was always very obliging. You'll like him. And give him my regards. They don't make men like him these days."

IT WAS almost seven o'clock when John Lardner came back to our offices on Fortieth Street. He came over to the desk and sat down beside me. He was obviously under something of a strain. He just sat there, eyes turned toward the floor and said nothing.

He mopped his face, tried to say something, and then relapsed into silence.

"Well," I said, "what's the trouble? Did you get anything out of Mr. Ford — any little twist that might make a story?"

"I think I did," said John cautiously. "You see, he died while I was there."

That is how we happened to have a

fine, exclusive two-column story on the passing of Simeon Ford. He was always obliging, just as I had told Lardner he was. But I still can't imagine how I happened to be thinking of the old gentleman on that particular afternoon. Maybe it was a psychic hunch, if such things exist, which I doubt. Anyhow, the gaunt, hairy-faced old humorist, as his last gracious gesture, did us a favor.



PORTABLE RADIO

BY MILTON KAPLAN

CUSHION our battered senses soft with sound
Against the silence; stuff our pillows round
With sound of music and laughter: peace is a voice
And love is a word in the latest popular song.
Perhaps there will be peace and love, there will
Be hope to insulate us from the chill
Of fear if we can hear the putty voice
Calking the crevices of our consciousness
Until we are impervious and strong.

Let words flake useless, powdering the ground —
We do not care. Give us the ceaseless sound
Of words filling the thundering hollows of
Our self-sufficiency with monotone.
Cling to us for we are frightened and alone:
The voice will whisper peace, will promise love.

TOO TOUGH FOR CAPONE

By W. A. S. DOUGLAS

STEVE SUMNER passed away in Chicago this year at the ripe old age of ninety-six, mourned by everybody in the milk business from dairy owners down and by a lot of other people who had nothing to do with milk but to drink it.

Steve was a union boss in a city where a union boss has to be tough to hang on; he was also an honest union boss. If he had acted as have many other Chicago labor chiefs, he would have left a sizeable fortune behind him. He died a poor man.

Steve defied, fought and whipped the most ruthless mob of musclers-in ever to scourge business, industry and unionism in a great city. He came to Chicago as a young man from a Maine village, drove a milk wagon seven days a week for a miserable wage, saw himself growing old and began to wonder what would happen to him when he would eventually slow down and be discarded by his employers. There were no pensions, no social security in those gone days, and what a milkman was paid was barely enough to live on; they managed somehow

but they were never able to save anything out of their meagre earnings.

In 1901 Steve Sumner, then fifty-one years of age, began preaching unionism to his fellow milk wagon drivers. He quit his job to talk, to argue, to canvass; he was told he was foolish. His answer was that in a very few years Steve Sumner would be thrown out of his job anyhow and so would the man with whom he was arguing. Organization meant better wages, shorter hours, benefits, savings.

IN THE summer of 1902, with his own savings wiped out by a year of unpaid evangelism among his fellow workers, Steve had seventy-eight signatures to his application to the American Federation of Labor for permission to form a union. The charter was granted and Steve became the union's business agent. The dairy-men laughed. If Steve and his boys started any trouble, out they would go: plenty of labor was available; milk delivery didn't call for brains. The hell with Sumner and his crazy union — just a lot of old men.

W. A. S. DOUGLAS has had newspaper experience all over the world. Formerly a correspondent for the Baltimore Sun, Boston Herald, and New York Herald Tribune, he is now a columnist and editorial writer for the Chicago Sun.

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A few weeks after the charter had been granted Steve Sumner, early in the morning, passed a saloon outside of which stood a dejected-looking horse attached to a loaded milk wagon. Steve went inside, ordered a glass of milk and looked around. There was the driver of the wagon, drunk. He was not a union member.

"There's women and children waiting for that load of yours, chum," said Sumner walking up to the drunken driver. "And you're laying down on them. What's more, you ain't fit to deliver. Get the hell home out of here."

The driver's reply was abusive. Steve, broad-shouldered, already gray-haired, amazingly husky, grabbed the man, heaved him into the street, climbed aboard the milk wagon, checked the delivery book, made the round and drove back to the dairy.

"I've made the delivery your man was too drunk to make," he told the astonished dairy manager. "I'm the business agent of the new union. What you do with him is none of our business now. But I'll tell you that when the time comes for him to join up, as it will for all of your help, he'll find it tough sledding if he hasn't changed his ways."

That story circulated through the dairies and among the drivers too. Service was far from perfect; improvement meant better prices and more business for employers. If Steve Sumner was going to make the milk wagon drivers behave, that was something. Better men deserved better

wages. It got around that Steve touched no liquor, not even tea or coffee — nothing but buttermilk or sweet milk. "Buttermilk Steve," they soon began to call him.

Within a few months after this incident, the union's membership had grown to about 700. Then, one day, "Buttermilk Steve" wandered into another saloon just outside the gates of a big dairy. This was a hangout for drivers before they started off on their rounds. A score of them were taking their bourbon neat when the business agent and two others walked in armed with sledge hammers. They smashed the bar and the bottles.

"Liquor and milk don't mix," roared Steve, as he herded the drivers out of the wrecked saloon.

The union prospered exceedingly. Its fixed rule of no drinking on duty commended it to employers, for drunken drivers were their biggest headache. Steve, moreover, was a stickler for good behavior on duty in other respects as well. He demanded courtesy, service, promptness.

A dozen years after its charter had been granted, the union could boast 100 per cent membership.

II

FOR A quarter of a century Steve's organization went its untroubled, pleasant way — until union racketeering became a fine art among Chicago gangsters. In 1928, the Capone mob, flushed with its conquests of

other organizations, began to cast covetous eyes on the Milk Wagon Drivers. There was a membership of 7200, a treasury of \$1,000,000, an annual income of \$935,000. Nice pickings.

"Big Tim" Murphy, a number-one-muscler, was facing trial for participation in the Rondout mail robbery and needed \$50,000 for defense money. He put the bite on Steve Sumner, who had always remained business agent and secretary, and on the union's president, Robert Fritchie. Sumner said no. Next day two cars drove past the milkmen's headquarters at 220 South Ashland Avenue and poured a fusillade of bullets into the offices. Nobody was hurt. That afternoon "Big Tim" repeated his demand. Sumner said no, even more forcibly than before. When he found that Sumner could not be scared, "Big Tim" went after easier prey for his \$50,000. But the milkmen's troubles were just beginning.

Scarface Al Capone, lord of all he surveyed from the rooftop windows of his suite in the old Metropolitan Hotel, held himself somewhat aloof from union racketeering but he gave his underlings permission to do what they wished if they found a chance for an easy killing. And Steve's union was considered easy by George "Red" Barker who had already successfully muscled into the outlaw Chicago Teamsters' Union. Barker came to Sumner, announcing that he had declared himself in. Sumner told him sulphurously where to go. The fact

that Barker, a known killer, was armed didn't faze the eighty-year-old union boss.

Barker went out but he came back — with bombs. Two were tossed into the Milk Wagon Drivers' headquarters. Chicago's mayor, "Big Bill" Thompson, believed in letting these difficulties work themselves out; so did his police force. Half a dozen collectors and assistant business agents for the union were slugged by Barker's roughhouse men. Bullets from cruising gangster cars smashed more windows. Still old Steve wouldn't surrender his union to the mob. He refused police protection because, he declared, "It wouldn't amount to a damn anyhow."

Then "Red" Barker tried other tactics. He kidnapped the union's president, Bob Fritchie. That got the old man. He was afraid the thugs would torture his friend Bob. He still didn't bother with the police but he laid down \$50,000, and Fritchie was released, unharmed. Barker was mowed down by machine guns a few weeks after he presumably received his share of the ransom.

ALTHOUGH he had yielded to extortion in order to save his friend from harm, Sumner nevertheless had held the gangsters at bay; his union was still intact and free. The Chicago mob kept after him, however, and in the summer of 1932 — the year Steve Sumner celebrated his eightieth birthday — it decided to de-feather the old man for all time. Capone had gone to

prison, leaving Frank Nitti ("The Enforcer") and Murray ("The Camel") Humphreys to share overlordship. Prohibition was doomed and the boys were looking round for fresh fields of endeavor and profit. The rich Milk Wagon Drivers' Union, Local 753, now affiliated with the International Teamsters' Union, stood at the top of the list of prospects.

A delegation of hoodlums, led by Humphreys, descended on union headquarters, still at 220 South Ashland Avenue, a solid old stone mansion said to have been built by "Long John" Wentworth, one of the city's earliest mayors. Humphreys had a notable list of killers with him — "Three Finger" Jack White, "Klon-dike" Mike O'Donnell, Frankie Diamond (Capone's brother-in-law), James "Fur" Sammons, Marcus "Studs" Looney. They threw open the doors and confronted Ray Bryant, the union cashier. Steve Sumner wasn't there.

"You tell that old so-and-so," announced "The Camel" Humphreys, "that next time we come loaded for bear. We're taking over this joint."

The next time they came, eighty-year-old Steve was waiting for them. Let him tell it his own way, as he told it under oath in a Federal court:

"Humphreys started off. He made me several propositions. First off he wanted me to take into the union a dairy the boys were operating themselves [The Meadowmoor Dairy]. He went on to say the boys all knew they would be out of luck when

Prohibition was gone and legal beer back and that they needed steady income. He said he didn't see why the dairy business couldn't pay almost as much as the old beer business. I told him I wasn't interested. I said I wouldn't supply union drivers for hoodlums and that he was wasting time talking to me. Then he said he would cut me for a share of all the profits if I would go along. Then he said his mob would run the drivers' union. I said they would not.

"Don't you shake down the dairy companies?" he asked.

"I said of course not nor would I have anything to do with such a course.

"A few sticks of dynamite and they'll come across and pay plenty," said Humphreys.

"Then he offered me cash to get out and give them the union. I said no.

"Well then," he said, 'we'll take it from you.'"

That was a declaration of war, and old Steve knew it. He bought steel plates and had them built into the walls of the Ashland Avenue mansion. There were steel shutters for the windows, the doors were reinforced with steel and everyone entering the building was first inspected through a barred slot with a steel swingback.

STEVE fortified his home at 7348 Constance Avenue in the same fashion. He asked no help from the police and received none. Samuel Insull had fled

to Greece following the crash of his utilities' empire, so Steve Sumner bought Insull's armored car. It had steel lining with bullet-proof glass windows. Its sides were studded with portholes for rifles.

Then, from his armored fortress, his armored home and his armored car, old Steve Sumner sent word to the boys to "come and get it."

But they wouldn't fight — that is, in the open. There were sluggings of agents, bombing of milk depots, shooting of drivers — but no open, frontal attack. For eight years, old Steve drove around in his armored car, collecting dues, addressing meetings, running his union. With his armed chauffeur and his armed bodyguard, he traveled 134,000 miles. He kept his little picked army of expert marksmen until the new world war came along. In November 1942, he donated his armored car to a scrap drive.

"Melt it down into bullets," he said, "and use them on hoodlums who, no matter how bad they may be, will at least stand up to you and fight."

III

AT THE mellow age of ninety-two, Steve Sumner decided to call it a day. He handed over to competent, honest men one of the wealthiest unions in the country and one which, through him, had done as much for the working man as any other organization of its kind — more than most.

Steve was a "soft touch." He might

have been a rich man if he had been more thrifty or if he had been just a wee bit corrupt, but he wasn't that type. What money he made, over living costs for himself, his wife and daughter, was either spent on union business or loaned out or given to anyone who needed it or said he needed it. He often loaned money to people he hardly knew. Anyone with a hard-luck story, especially if it involved children, got what he asked for; ninety per cent of these loans, officials of the union say, remain unpaid. Mrs. Sumner, whom Steve married when he was a mere lad of forty-seven, still has numerous notes, running into thousands of dollars, all unpaid. Steve never tried to collect, and she says she never will either.

Steve loved people and he loved a good joke. He didn't go in for the practical or for the dirty variety, but he always had some kind of a humorous story to tell. He detested smoking so much he would often pull a cigar or a cigarette out of the mouth of a total stranger! Then he would remember to apologize and would usually rip a five-dollar bill from his roll to make amends. His battles were both verbal and physical. But he never held a grudge — not even against the mob. He had no real personal enemies although he made plenty of business enemies; even these, however, remembered to write letters of condolence and sympathy to his widow after his death, thousands of letters telling her how much they had admired the old bruiser.

Steve Sumner was built like a barrel, something after the style of Tony Galento. He was about five feet seven tall and always weighed around 200 pounds. He was as strong as a bull. When he lost his temper he could curse better than any of his drivers.

MANY a union official saw the boss tackle much bigger men and heave them bodily out of the way. Once a Greek wrestler, six feet two, weighing 230 pounds, sent to the union headquarters by the Capone boys to make trouble, pushed his way into the corridor past the guards. He was shouting about what he would do if he did not get satisfaction for some imaginary wrong. Steve came roaring out of his office to confront the Greek, hands on hips. The man took one look at the union boss' determined stance and went for his gun. Instead of diving at him, Steve threw back his leonine head and laughed. The Greek was dumfounded by such tactics; and as he stood there Steve walked up to him, snatched away his gun, picked him up bodily and threw him down the nine steps to the street.

Steve knew about everybody in Chicago and just about everybody knew him — from Mayor Edward J. Kelly down to the bums on West Madison Street. He had a thousand small personal charities, most of which his wife only heard about after his death. Then characters from all walks of life came to tell her how Steve had paid their doctor's bills or

found them jobs or taken care of overdue rent. For ten days after his death policemen were at his home to move the line of sympathizers.

He never had a hobby nor did he take any recreation. He didn't know what a vacation was. When his wife would prompt him to take a few days off he would say, pointing to his armored car: "When I get in there and drive to work I get all the recreation and vacation I want."

STEVE belonged to no church though he sometimes attended services when the notion took him; then he would march into the nearest house of prayer, regardless of its denomination. His religion, he once told his wife, was to make a better life for his fellow man the best way he knew how. He certainly did all he could to that end in the milk business. Reminiscing before his death he said:

"There was slavery in this sort of a living before we formed the union. We worked eighteen to twenty hours a day for twelve dollars a week. I hopped on and off a milk wagon for more years than I can remember and I used to figure on four hours out of every twenty-four for sleep. I'm against all slavery, be it the slavery of the booze bottle or the slavery of toil. I defy anybody to prove I ever did any slugging until I was slugged first. Yes, I've beaten up milk drivers when I've found them drunk or even drinking on the job. Milk is like the mail only more important. It has got to get through."

THE THEATRE

BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

Eugene O'Neill after Twelve Years

TWO weeks after this number of THE AMERICAN MERCURY appears on the newsstands, what to my mind is one of the most impressive plays ever written by an American dramatist will be presented in the theatre. Its title is *The Iceman Cometh* and, as is not altogether surprising, its author is Eugene O'Neill.

It is now just twelve years and nine months since O'Neill's last play, called *Days without End*, saw production, and in the long intervening spell the public has had small news of him. Now and then came vague and contradictory reports that he was working on a cycle of eight or nine plays to be named by the general and somewhat turgid title, *A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed*; that he was very ill and no longer able to do any work; and that he had successively retired from the theatre to Sea Island, Georgia, and the Valley of the Moon in California, there to devote the rest of his life to nursing his health, raising Dalmatian dogs, and laughing at English dramatic criticism. But from the man himself there issued not so much as a peep. What, really, was he up to?

It happens that we have been close friends for going on thirty years now,

and that I am in a position to tell. That in the period of his absence he completed the mentioned *The Iceman Cometh*, along with the subsequently to be produced *A Moon for the Misbegotten* and the still later to be produced *A Touch of the Poet*, the public has been apprised. These three plays, however, were by no means all. During the twelve-odd years, he not only outlined in minute detail not eight or nine but all of eleven plays of the cycle referred to — the eleven were to be played, however, as eight with three combined into duplex units and presented, like *Strange Interlude*, on the same afternoons, evenings and nights — but further definitely completed seven of them, including the three double-length ones, and got pretty well into the eighth.

IN ADDITION, he finished a separate and independent play of full length called *Long Day's Journey into Night*, production of which he will not allow, for reasons which I may not yet specify, for some years. Nor, yet again, was that all. Besides *Long Day's Journey into Night*, he also completed the first play of a much shorter and entirely different cycle of which no word has until now reached anyone.

Its title, like that of the contemplated briefer series in its entirety, is *By Way of Obit*. It runs for forty-five or so minutes and involves, very successfully I think, an imaginative technical departure from O'Neill's previous work. It contains but two characters and is laid in New York in approximately the same period as *The Iceman Cometh*, of which more anon.

All of which, one will agree, is not such bad going for a sick man.

II

THE plays, *The Iceman Cometh* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, as well as the two last named, are distinct and wholly apart from the cycle of eleven plays. *A Touch of the Poet*, however, was to be first play of that cycle. As to the cycle itself, O'Neill gradually convinced himself, after he had got as far as he had with it, that his dramaturgical plan was faulty. Without further ado, he destroyed two of the double-length, or four, of the plays he had written, preserving only *A Touch of the Poet*, the third double-header (*More Stately Mansions*) and one scene in another to be called *The Calms of Capricorn*. As for *A Touch of the Poet*, it seems to him to be a unit in itself and may well, he thinks, stand apart and alone. When and if he will return to work on the cycle as he has newly planned it, he does not know. In his head at the moment is an exciting idea for another play which bears no relation to the cycle. It will probably be his

next effort after he has finished the production supervision of the three plays noted.

THE reason he withheld these three plays for so long is that he has made up his mind never again to permit a play of his to be produced unless he can be present. His health was such that it did not allow him to come to New York earlier. There was also another reason. He did not believe that, while the war was on, the theatre was right for the plays, though none is in any way related to it. It was simply his feeling that wartime audiences would not be in a mood for such serious drama.

His determination to be on deck at all future productions of his plays stems from his experience with his play *Dynamo*, which was shown in 1929. He was unable to come to New York for the casting and rehearsals of that one and learned all too late that the Theatre Guild had cast in the leading female rôle the fair young cute one, Claudette Colbert, famous for the symmetry of her legs and not wholly unaware of the fact. Throughout the play, the young lady sought to augment her fame by placing the two reasons therefor on display whenever one of the other characters seemed to her to be diverting the attention of the audience, and the play as a consequence ran a bad second to her extremities.

"Henceforth," O'Neill averred, "I myself cast not only actresses but legs!"

In addition to the projected plays specified, the playwright has made copious notes on at least three or four others. Some of these notes were begun even before he went into retirement; others were made during that period. They include plans for, among the others, an heroic drama of ancient Chinese locale. This he has been mulling for fifteen years, though, if he does it at all, which is doubtful, it would not be put into experimental preliminary writing until he finishes the one — with an American locale — alluded to as likely his next.

THE long cycle, when and if he returns to it, will concern a single Irish-American family over a span of approximately 130 years and will indicate broadly through its successive generations the changes in America and American life. Not the changes in the obvious theatrical sense, but the changes as they influence the members of the family. It will continue to be a study in character rather than a study in national progress. The latter will be held to a dramatic undertone. O'Neill's dissatisfaction with the work as far as it had gone proceeded from his conviction that it should deal with one family and not two, as it presently did. And also that, in the form he had written it, it began at the wrong point and over-told the story. Though he appreciated that he could rewrite what he had already done, he preferred to do away with much of it and to start afresh.

The cycle, as he now envisages it,

will begin with the French-and-Indian Wars period and will present its first member of the family in the light of a deserter from the fighting forces.

III

O'NEILL's attitude toward criticism of his work in particular and in general has not changed. However denunciatory and stinging it may be at times, he shows no indignation and maintains at least outwardly an appearance of smiling tolerance. Unlike a number of his playwriting contemporaries, he never makes public reply to it, though now and again to a close friend he will privately express his amusement over certain of its more wayward aspects.

An English critic (not Spender, who has been generally more clear-sighted) recently, for example, had at O'Neill with the old, familiar contention that, though he may think of himself as a poet, he is far from one. In proof whereof, the critic delightedly quoted this speech by Marsden in *Strange Interlude*:

We'll be married in the afternoon, decidedly. I've already picked out the church, Nina — a gray ivied chapel, full of restful shadow, symbolical of the peace we have found. The crimsons and purples in the windows will stain our faces with faded passion. It must be in the hour before sunset when the earth dreams in after-thoughts and mystic premonitions of life's beauty, etc.

"Didn't he realize," chuckled O'Neill, "that the attempt there certainly wasn't poetry, but poetic

travesty? Marsden, as anyone must easily see, is a sentimental throwback, a kind of *Yellow Book* period revision, and I was deliberately using that 'crimsons and purples in the windows,' 'staining our faces with faded passion' and so on stuff to indicate it."

The notion that O'Neill entertains a profound satisfaction with everything he has written and resents any opposite opinion — a notion that pops up between the lines in various critical treatises on his work, as, for example, Eric Bentley's recent *The Playwright as Thinker* — is nonsensical. I give you several instances out of my own personal critical experience. When his *The First Man* was produced, I wrote acidly of it, even indulging in some ridicule. Reading the criticism, O'Neill grinned. "You let it down too easy," he observed. "It's no good." When subsequently I wrote in the same vein about *Welded*, which he seemed to have faith in when he gave me the script to read, he allowed, "I know now I was 'way off; the play is all wrong; it's no good." When, on the other hand, I found certain things to my liking in *Gold*, he took me to task. "You're wrong. It's a bad play. I'm telling you."

He further believes that *The Fountain* is more defective than I found it to be, and that *Dynamo*, though granting its lapses, is considerably less so. Only in the case of *Days without End*, which I could not critically stomach, has he vigorously op-

posed my opinion, and even in this case he allows that he now feels he must rewrite the play's ending for the definitive edition of his works.

AS ORIGINALLY conceived, this *Days without End* was laid back in the year 1857 or thereabout. Bringing it up to the 1930s seemed to me, among others, to render its double sex standard idea somewhat anachronistic and shopworn. O'Neill, however, was not to be persuaded.

What he has persuaded himself, nevertheless, is that his hero's final gesture calls for alteration, though the alteration consists simply in reverting to the dramatic scheme as he first conceived it.

He is a stickler for casting and direction. As to the latter, his constant concern is any sentimentalization of his work. "Where sentiment exists," he says, "there is sufficient of it in the characters, and any directorial emphasis would throw it out of all proportion and make it objectionable." As to casting, he is generally opposed to so-called name actors. "They distract attention from the play to themselves," he argues. "My plays are not for stars but for simply good actors."

"Besides, you can never count on the idiosyncrasies of stars; they may not stick to a play and may so damage its chances on the road. I'm afraid of them, as I've had some experience with them. Also, they sometimes want you to change certain things in your play. Not for me!"

IV

TO RETURN to *The Iceman Cometh*.

Laid in a low saloon in the New York of 1912, it may very roughly be described as kind of American *Nachtsyl*. Like that play of Gorki's, though it in no other way resembles it, it treats of a group of degenerated social outcasts and the advent among them of a man with a philosophy of life new and disturbing to them. Since critical ethics here prevent me from going into the play in detail before production, I may not reveal too much more about it. I may record, however, that its language is realistic, at times violently so; that its cast of alcoholic down-and-outs includes gamblers, grafting cops, harlots, pimps, anarchist riff-raff, military failures, college-

educated wastrels, stool-pigeons, *et al*; that it is written in four parts; and that it contains one of the longest and, I think, most moving soliloquies, only briefly interrupted, in modern drama, that placed in the mouth of its traveling salesman protagonist.

The play will again attest to the fact, lost upon certain of O'Neill's critics, that he is far from lacking a healthy sense of humor. Some of the comedy writing is irresistible. It will also demonstrate again the deepest appreciation of character known to any of his American playwriting contemporaries.

And it embraces, among many other things, the most pitifully affecting picture of a woman — the unseen wife of the protagonist — that I, for one, have encountered in years of playgoing.



SHOCK THERAPY FOR INSANITY

BY MILTON L. ZISOWITZ

UNTIL the accident, Bob had been a normal, well-adjusted person. Recently returned from the Pacific, he had been cheerfully awaiting his discharge from the Army and making plans to return to college. Then Bill, his best friend, had been killed in an auto crash while Bob was driving. A drunken driver had speeded out of a side road without warning and overturned their car. Bob was cleared of all blame.

Although Bob had miraculously escaped physical injury, within a few days he was admitted to an Army hospital, a victim of schizophrenia, one of the most dreaded of all mental diseases. For a month he lay oblivious to all that went on about him, hearing only "voices" that told him he must "atone for his crime," seeing nothing but accusing fingers pointing at him.

Bob's doctor then decided to use electric shock therapy. Electrodes were clamped to Bob's temples, two dials were adjusted (one to control the intensity, the other, the duration of the shock) and the switch was thrown. Immediately the boy lapsed

into unconsciousness; a few seconds later his body was thrashing about convulsively. After about a minute, these spasms ended and, with a sigh, Bob fell into a normal sleep. Fifteen minutes later he opened his eyes, looked about him and asked for a cigarette. Thus electric shock therapy, a powerful weapon in psychiatry's battle against mental disease, which was introduced into the United States little more than six years ago, contributed to the recovery of one more victim.

HALF a million people are confined today in our hospitals for mental diseases, and the total is growing. In 1941, the last year for which data are available, there were 542,477 patients in these hospitals. During that year 51,630 patients were discharged and 46,262 paroled, while 160,202 new cases — almost twice as many as those released — were admitted. The number of mental patients in the United States is almost equal to the number who die each year from heart disease and cancer; new admissions exceed

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deaths from all ailments except heart disease, our greatest killer. America's annual bill for the care of these sufferers is nearly two hundred million dollars, and the total cost to society in human suffering and wasted lives is incalculable.

Until a few years ago, little could be done for Bob and others like him. Occupational therapy, psychotherapy and proper care were effective in some cases, but the population of our mental hospitals continued to increase. The greater number of those hospitalized were doomed to spend the rest of their lives cut off from normality.

IT WAS in 1927 that the shock therapy treatment was first used. Dr. Manfred Sakel of the Berlin Sanitarium, like many other scientists, had been experimenting for some time with insulin in the treatment of drug addicts. On those infrequent occasions when too large an injection of the drug resulted in shock, Dr. Sakel noticed a strange change in his patients after their recovery from this state. Many of them seemed better adjusted than most addicts when deprived of their drug. Could not a similar improvement be effected in other addicts, as well as in sufferers from various psychoses, by deliberate and controlled insulin shock? This technique was tested successfully in a large number of cases.

When later experiments proved insulin shock could be used with notable success in curing victims of the greatest of all mental diseases —

schizophrenia — Dr. Sakel knew that a potent weapon to combat mental illness had been forged.

Schizophrenia, or dementia praecox as it is sometimes called, is a particularly tragic disease. It is responsible for 25 per cent of all new admissions to mental hospitals, and of these, more than 50 per cent must be institutionalized for the rest of their lives. Most frequently it attacks young people. In about 75 per cent of these cases, the disease strikes those in the age group between 20 and 50; and almost half of its victims are under 30.

In acute cases, such as Bob's, the patient changes almost overnight from a normal, fairly well integrated person to one whose existence is a kind of living death. More commonly schizophrenia's attack develops gradually, insidiously, and, to add to the tragedy, the victim himself is horribly aware that his mind and personality are disintegrating.

It is true that some schizophrenes recover without the aid of shock therapy. In a report published in 1939, Dr. Benjamin Malzberg of the New York State Bureau of Mental Hygiene set the figure for recoveries without shock therapy at 21 per cent. The estimates of other reliable psychiatrists with reference to spontaneous recovery vary widely from 10 to 50 per cent. The fact remains that a minimum of 50 per cent (or perhaps a maximum of 90 per cent, depending on the figures one accepts) are doomed to spend the rest of their lives uselessly in institutions for the insane.

II

DR. SAKEL introduced the insulin shock method to this country in 1936. Late in that year Dr. Clarence H. Bellinger, superintendent of Brooklyn State Hospital, sent Dr. Christopher Terrence to observe the work at an experimental clinic which had been established in New York City's Bellevue Hospital. Insulin shock therapy was introduced at Brooklyn State Hospital in January 1937. The first group treated consisted of ten men and ten women, but facilities were soon provided for a larger number of patients.

The medical profession was somewhat skeptical about the reports of success which began to come out of Brooklyn State, and a commission which had been set up to study state hospital problems in New York decided to investigate. In June 1944 it published a report completely vindicating Dr. Sakel's method. In 1941, according to this report, almost 80 per cent of the schizophrenic patients who had been given early insulin treatment were able to leave the hospital; previously no more than 50 per cent, at most, were cured. Furthermore, those patients who had been treated with insulin shock were able to leave the hospital almost four months earlier than those who recovered spontaneously, and they were restored to a far higher degree of personal adjustment and social usefulness than those who recovered without the aid of shock treatment.

Watching the insulin-shock ward in operation is a dramatic experience. Here doctors are engaged in a constant struggle to maintain a delicate balance between life and death. Pulse, temperature, respiration of each patient are constantly checked. Here a nurse whispers: "Doctor, the pulse is down too low"; an injection of adrenalin jolts the heart back into action. There one of the patients shows signs of respiratory failure; artificial respiration and a dose of glucose revive him. "Doctor, he's coming out of shock." The psychiatrist watches intently, looking carefully for any complications which might arise, keenly alert for clues which could help determine the future course of treatment.

THE treatment, it may be said, is dramatic; so is the recovery. Here is a typical case history:

Miss T., a nineteen-year-old schizophrenic, was admitted to Brooklyn State Hospital, extremely apprehensive, depressed, fearful that "her body was drying up," and hopeless about her condition. She was the third of four children, the only girl in the family. Because she believed both parents favored her brothers, she was unhappy at home. Finishing high school, Miss T. obtained a job as a clerk, but continued her education at night, completing three years of college. During this time she achieved a certain scholastic and social success, belonged to an organized social group, and had a fairly wide circle of friends.

Just before her breakdown Miss T.

developed acne and used a treatment which caused the skin on her face to peel. Self-conscious about her appearance, she refused to go to work or to her classes; she ate poorly, became irritable, and spent most of her time in bed. When she returned to her job after a month's absence, the girl was told she had been replaced. Then she turned anxious and antagonistic; she began to have delusions, claimed she heard "voices" and insisted that her mother was jealous of her and kept her from her father and brothers.

Committed to the hospital, she was given insulin shock therapy and paroled three months after the treatment had been terminated. In the three and a half years since her parole, Miss T. has held several jobs as sales clerk and clerical worker, and has become once more the attractive, socially and vocationally successful person she was before her breakdown.

Despite the drastic nature of the cure, fatalities are extremely rare. Out of 1128 cases treated at Brooklyn State over a five-year period, only four deaths occurred during treatment; only one of these could reasonably be attributed to the treatment itself. There are no apparent ill effects, and, fortunately, the patient has no recollection of the treatment itself.

But insulin shock therapy has its drawbacks. It is slow, and its administration requires a large and carefully trained staff. Even at Brooklyn State, which has one of the largest shock units in the country, only sixty patients are under treatment during any

given period. Fortunately, newer, simpler, less expensive, and faster methods of administering shock treatment have been devised, the most notable of which is the electric shock treatment.

III

ELECTRIC shock treatment had its origin in the research activities of three scientists: Dr. Ladislaus von Meduna of Budapest, and Drs. Ugo Cerletti and Lucio Bini of Rome. Psychiatrists had known for a long time that schizophrenia and epilepsy rarely attack the same patient. Perhaps, they reasoned, there was something about epileptic seizures which was antagonistic to schizophrenia. Why not then try to cure schizophrenia by artificially induced epileptic fits?

Von Meduna used a drug called metrazol, injected intravenously, and his results were almost as successful as those which Sakel was attaining with insulin. The chief advantage of the use of metrazol lay in the fact that it took a far shorter time to effect a cure.

Metrazol, however, produced unpleasant effects upon the patient. Before going into the convulsive seizures which the drug produced, he had feelings of acute discomfort and horrifying premonitions of death. Unlike those undergoing the insulin shock treatment, the patient to whom metrazol was administered remembered these sensations after the treatment was over. As a result, it was extremely

difficult to get the patient to submit himself to metrazol therapy for the required length of time.

Representatives of the Rome Psychiatric Clinic had been sent to observe von Meduna's work, and after they reported the disadvantages to their chiefs, Cerletti and Bini, they decided to experiment with convulsive seizures induced by electricity. Results were astonishing. Electric shock had none of the disadvantages of the earlier methods. It was safe, rapid, inexpensive, and best of all, the patients did not remember either the preliminaries to the treatment or the shock itself.

IN 1940 Dr. Lothar B. Kalinowsky, who had worked in Rome with Cerletti and Bini, came to the United States and began to use the electric shock technique at the New York State Psychiatric Institute at the Columbia University Medical Center and also at the large Pilgrim State Hospital on Long Island. His results measured up to those which were obtained with insulin.

In numerous medical articles as well as in a definitive book on shock therapies published in March 1946 with Dr. Paul Hoch, Dr. Kalinowsky has stressed the importance of early treatment of schizophrenia. He points out that with patients who have been ill for less than six months, improvement is shown in more than 70 per cent of the cases. With patients who have suffered from the disease for two years, improvement is evident in only

about 60, while only a small number afflicted for longer than two years are helped. Other investigators report a similar decrease in efficacy of all the shock methods when the disease is of long duration.

But electric shock therapy is effective in other mental diseases too — diseases in connection with which the insulin method does not seem to be helpful. In manic-depressive psychoses and in involutional melancholia, two diseases which account for 15 per cent of all cases in mental hospitals and for untold thousands who are treated by private physicians, Dr. Kalinowsky's published figures show results which are even more startling than those which are achieved in schizophrenia. Improvement is shown in almost 90 per cent of these patients regardless of the duration of the disease.

THE administration of electric shock therapy is extremely simple. It can be used by any competent psychiatrist after a brief training period, and hospitalization is not necessary unless other factors call for it. The patient lies on a table, and the physician places two electrodes on his head. He sets one dial which controls the duration of the shock, another which determines the amount of current to be used, and throws a switch. The patient immediately becomes unconscious, and in a few seconds his body is convulsed by a typical epileptic seizure. The spasm lasts for a very short time, and the patient remains

unconscious for a few minutes longer. The entire process takes about fifteen minutes.

After the patient regains consciousness, he remembers nothing of his experience. He rests for about half an hour, and then he can go home.

In the case of schizophrenia, the patient is given about thirty treatments, but in other types of mental illness, cures are effected with as few as four or five shocks. According to all psychiatrists who have worked with electric shock, there are no harmful effects on the brain. Seventy to 130 volts are passed through the patient, and the actual shock lasts only from one- to five-tenths of a second. Dr. Kalinowsky points out that even tremendous overdoses cause no ill effects. In more than 2000 cases which he has treated there have been no fatalities.

The cures are amazing. Mrs. B. was brought to a clinic in April 1945, having been in a deep melancholia for almost four years. For the last three months she had been tube fed. She refused to meet even the closest members of her family. During the last year of her illness, she had made three attempts at suicide. This woman was suffering from that plague of the middle-aged, involuntional melancholia. After five electric shock treatments, Mrs. B. was restored to complete health.

When the doctor saw Mr. R. for the first time, he had been in the deep depression typical of manic-depressive psychotics for almost two years. He blamed himself for sins which he had never committed, wept incessantly and complained that as a punishment for his evil life, his "stomach had been sealed up." After seven shock treatments, Mr. R. was completely cured and resumed his business career.

MORE than half of the 500,000 people in our mental hospitals — the manic-depressives, the involuntional melancholiacs and the schizophrenes — can now be cured by shock therapy.

While the saving of millions of dollars spent annually for the care of the mentally ill is important, far more important, of course, is the saving of human lives which will result from the rehabilitation of a large percentage of this country's psychotics. There is perhaps no other form of illness which more seriously disrupts the lives of both the victims and their families than mental disease. The tempo of modern living has caused a steady increase in the number of cases admitted to hospitals each year.

Shock therapies, unknown until a few years ago, have made it possible for large numbers of mentally afflicted, hitherto considered incurable, to return to normal life.



RHYMING UNDERWORLD SLANG

By DAVID W. MAURER

WHEN we investigate slang, we are drilling in the fountain-head of native American speech. As Walt Whitman said: "Americans have an appetite in their speech for unhemmed latitude, coarseness, directness, live epithets, expletives, words of opprobrium, resistance." And like Whitman, we prefer our language limber, lasting and fierce. Slang has become a hallmark of the American language. A new slang fad spreads as quickly in the United States as the latest fashion in hats, a new political fallacy, or a new revelation of God.

Where, in the complexity of American slang, does "Australian" rhyming argot fit? In America it is primarily a prison jargon. It is found especially in Federal prisons and on the Pacific Coast where long-termers are confined. Seldom does one encounter it in the outside world, though some of it seems to be seeping out into general usage in West Coast cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles.

There are indications that rhyming argot may become the next major slang fad to capture the American fancy. Americans have shown no aver-

sion to adopting words from criminal speech in the past. Those intricate systems of secretive speech used by criminals, which linguists call argot, have for many years freshened and activated much of our non-standard speech. Not a few argot words have achieved respectability.

Rhyming argot, however, is in a different category from most underworld speech. It does not belong to any special criminal group. There is nothing secret about it. It is completely devoid of technical terms, and consequently unsuited to the purposes of thieves, con men, safe-blowers or other criminal and semi-criminal craftsmen. Each of these groups has its own specialized vocabulary. Rhyming argot becomes a *lingua franca* among criminals, both professional and amateur, once they are confined to prison. They use it intermixed with their already well-stocked jargons.

COMPARATIVELY simple as underworld speech goes, rhyming argot consists of a couplet in which the last word rhymes with the meaning. For example, the prisoner does not say he

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is in jail, but in *ginger-ale*. His crime might have been slitting someone's *hairy-goat* (throat) with a *man-and-wife* (knife). Or maybe he used a *fly-flat* (gat) to *Jack Shay* (slay) a *club-and-stick* ("dick," detective).

The argot vocabulary is growing constantly because the rhyming principle, once established, lends itself to imitation. At least four other terms, for example, are used to denote a jail: *head-and-tail*, *moan-and-wail*, *lard-and-pail* and *whale-and-gale*. The prisoner may *plow-the-deep* (sleep) in the *roses-red* or in *Botany Bay*; both mean bed, the latter being a rhyme upon the colloquial "hay."

Because the argot can be so easily imitated, I suggest that it would be a natural for the bobby-sox brigade. They not only pride themselves on their ability to absorb the latest slang quickly, but also on a knack for playing by ear, so to speak. Let us suppose they adopt the word *mince-pies* for eyes — a term which has been in the rhyming argot for many years. Ingenious minds would go to work and produce *blue-skies*, *gnats-and-flies*, *sad-sighs* or fifty other terms, all meaning "eyes" simply because the last word forms the rhyme and because there may be some nebulous connection between the sound and the sense.

Give rhyming argot a few celebrated exponents, such as prominent radio and movie comedians, and I venture to suggest that the popularity of this freak usage could snowball overnight. The bobby-soxers might seize upon it as avidly as they did upon jive talk.

Before long it would find its way into the comic strips, into fiction, into the movies, into the schoolroom and eventually into the home. Like pig Latin in its heyday, rhyming argot could find a certain level of acceptance and enjoy a riotous career.

II

RHYMING argot has already made one tentative bid for popularity, in the motion-picture *Mr. Lucky*, of 1943. The hero of the movie was a seagoing gambler known as Joe the Greek. If you saw *Mr. Lucky*, you may remember this bit of dialogue between Joe and the heroine, Dorothy:

JOE: How you coming out there with my fiddle-and-flute?

DOROTHY: Fiddle-and-flute?

JOE: Suit. Suit.

DOROTHY: What kind of double-talk is that?

JOE: It's a language of its own. I picked it up in Australia.

DOROTHY: What's for hat?

JOE: Tit-for-tat.

DOROTHY: Shoes?

JOE: Ones-and-twos.

DOROTHY: It's just like poetry.

JOE: That's the idea — it jingles. Like you're a girl — that's a twist-and-twirl.

DOROTHY: And you?

JOE: A bloke. That's a heap-of-coke.

Adults seemed mildly amused by this new slang. Some of the younger set bantered it about for a while but eventually dropped it because of their strong preoccupation at the time with jitterbug talk. More recently it has been given literary stimulus by Gerald Kersh's novel, *Night and the City*, in

which Kersh depicts the London underworld and uses considerable rhyming argot.

Returning veterans may well reinforce the impetus already given rhyming slang in film and fiction. It is known and used by both British and Australian soldiers. Millions of American GIs who daily rubbed elbows with the Aussies and Limeys in every obscure corner of the globe have already received their introduction to the rhyme. These returning veterans have accepted rhyming argot as a realistic phase of colonial and cockney English. It is a peculiar fact that the popularity of rhyming slang in England and Australia has reached successive peaks coincidentally with the Empire's latest three wars — during the Boer War, World War I, and once again in World War II.

It is believed that rhyming argot originated among the cockneys of London early in the nineteenth century. The term *Jack Sprat* (brat), however, dates back to the sixteenth century. Some of the other oldtimers in the rhyming vocabulary are listed in J. C. Hotten's *Slang Dictionary*, published in England in 1859. Many others are found in *The Vulgar Tongue*, compiled two years earlier by Ducange Anglicus. Hotten recorded: *Brown Bess* (yes), *Brown Joe* (no), *bonnet-so-blue* (stew), *castle-rag* (flag), *bushy-park* (lark, a good time), *ding-dong* (song), *maid's-adorning* (morning), *butter-flap* (cap), *bull-and-cow* (row), *frog-and-toad* (road), *garden-gate* (mag-

istrate), *Fanny Blair* (hair), *Duke of York* (talk, also walk), *glorious-sinner* (dinner) and *I'm-afloat* (boat).

Among many others which have been recorded in recent years in America, the earlier collection by Anglicus includes: *Ben Flake* (steak), *Billy Button* (mutton), *chalk-farm* (arm), *Charing Cross* (horse), *Charley Prescott* (vest, waistcoat), *cherry-ripe* (pipe), *chevy-chase* (face), *cows-and-kisses* (Mrs.), *finger-and-thumb* (rum), *Jack Dandy* (brandy), *flounder-and-dab* (cab), *mince-pies* (eyes) and *lean-and-lurch* (church).

III

THE first printed example of rhyming argot in the United States that I have been able to uncover occurs in an issue of the *New York Police Gazette* in the 1850s. Since written language usually trundles well behind the vernacular speech, we may assume that the argot was introduced to this country somewhat earlier.

For many years I have been observing the incidence of rhyming argot in this country. Assembling a list of 349 rhyming terms used in American prisons, I attempted to find out if and how they came from Australia, as popular belief had it. The findings were somewhat surprising: 171 of the terms appear to have originated in the United States, with another 34 probables. Apparently by imitation, the original rhyming argot has been expanded until American inventions now outnumber the foreign borrowings.

In addition, Americans seem to have supplied some rather forceful figures of speech, a tendency to which the rhyming argot readily lends itself. The results are words like *garlic-and-glue* (stew), *nancy-prance* (dance) and *dinky-dirt* (shirt).

In order to find out how many of these terms might actually have come from Australia, I sent a copy of my lists to Dr. Sidney J. Baker, the noted Australian lexicographer. He found that only 9 of the 349 words had actually originated in Australia. Another 23 terms, all of British origin, have been recorded in Australia at some time or other. Of the remaining 314 terms, not one was established in Australia as far as Dr. Baker could determine. The 9 native Australianisms found in this country are: *Captain Cook* (look), *cockie's-clip* ("dip" or pickpocket), *mad-mick* (pick), *Pat Malone* (alone), *Sydney Harbor* (barber), *Hawksbury Rivers* (shivers), *Cobar-shower* (flower), *Mallee Root* (prostitute) and *Kennedy-rot* (sot or drunkard). Three more possible Australian inventions were also discovered.

Strangely enough, only two of the words originating in the United States have been introduced to Australia. This is a strikingly small number in view of the known migration of criminals both ways between the United States and Australia. Of course, Australia has its own rhyming slang. It is not large in vocabulary, but is used by the whole public, and not restricted to prisons or the underworld.

Dr. Baker wrote me recently: "I

have yet to hear a genuine Australian crook who would bother himself to imitate an 'English' accent; and I am sure that he would be unable to speak in rhyming couplets for the simple reason that his greatest failing is to clip and abbreviate. For instance, the cockney rhymster would use *frog-and-toad* for road; *plates-for-meat* for feet; *almond-rocks* for socks. It is unlikely that the Australian would get past *frog* for road; *plates* for feet; *almonds* for socks." The Australians also say *Oscar* for cash; *knock-me* for billy or tin pot; *fiddley* for quid (pound note). The original terms were *Oscar Asche*; *knock-me-silly* and *fiddley-did*.

This "clipping" process is the bane of investigators in the field of rhyming argot, because the final rhyming word is sometimes lost and the derivation becomes very difficult to trace. The clipping process is less pronounced in the United States than in Australia, but it does exist. The average American movie-goer knows that when the screen-version crook speaks of a *twist* he is talking about a girl, *twist-and-twirl* in rhyming argot.

IF THE rhyming argot which came to America did not originate in Australia, as is commonly believed, obviously it must have come directly from England. In collaboration with Dr. Baker, I was able to establish that 75 of the terms used in the United States are definite borrowings from England, and that the remaining 34, in all probability, were also borrowed from British usage.

Accepting the obvious conclusions in this case, however, entails accepting several knotty problems also. If the men who brought rhyming argot from London shipped the normal Atlantic routes, they would have landed on our East Coast. Why is the argot concentrated in the Pacific Coast ports?

The hypothesis that the argot came from England by way of Australia might explain the Pacific Coast concentration, particularly at San Francisco, the main port of entry from Australia. But why did not rhyming slang take even greater hold upon Australians than it did? After all, Australia was first settled in the main by transported criminals from London jails. If British underworld characters brought it to the United States, why not in greater degree to Australia? In a dictionary of three thousand slang words found in Australia, I counted only two dozen phrases of rhyming slang, although there may be more obscured by the clipping process.

One other question: How did the belief arise among American criminals that this system of argot derives from Australia? The popular conception of the underworld on the subject is contained in a letter from one of my informants. "The roving British and Australian thief," he writes, "has played his part in bringing the lingo to the racketlands of America, but the ones who have really brought the Australian lingo into our stream of speech have been the roving American thief and good-time bims [chorus girls and fortune hunters] who have plied

between 'Frisco, Shanghai and Sydney for the past fifty years." The underworld definitely believes the argot to be of Australian origin.

IV

WAS rhyming slang introduced by British swindlers and thieves working the Atlantic route of England, the Continent, South America and the United States? Perhaps by Australian and British crooks working the steamship routes of the Pacific? Or, as my informant suggests, by roving American hustlers and hooks? Perhaps all three played their part.

It is certain that the lingo came from across the seas (either from east or west, or both) over a period of many, many years. It promptly went underground, expanded and took on an American flavor. Now it is planted in strategic centers all over the country, only awaiting favorable conditions to spring into life. These centers are prisons, and any investigation into the use of the argot must begin with prison sources.

Working with informants in various prisons, I have been able to plot a comparative chart of the jargon's distribution throughout the United States. Prisons in the San Francisco area, of course, show the heaviest concentration. If we assign relative index-figures to several of these concentration-areas, we find that in Folsom Prison rhyming argot would get a rating of .25 in proportion to the total argot used. The figure is .20 at

nearby Alcatraz and San Quentin. Alcatraz is theoretically a "silent house." However, as one informant who has served time there comments, "There is no way to keep hooks from talking, and even if there was, they still have their knowledge of the lingo."

From San Francisco, the distribution spreads out fan-wise across the nation in a general west-to-east direction, south to Los Angeles (.05), and north to Seattle (.05). It follows the well-worn eastward travel routes of criminals, sometimes appearing in isolated inland prisons but notably absent from surrounding colloquial usage. Chicago, New York and Boston each show a .05 concentration.

Other index figures offer comment on the peculiar migratory habits of the underworld. The Texas prison system is listed at .07. Reno (.03) and the San Diego-Mexicali vicinity (.03) apparently learned the argot from criminals moving east after serving time on the West Coast. They find these gambling centers good spots to rest up and try their luck at the gaming tables.

Salt Lake City probably owes its .05 concentration to the fact that it is widely known in the underworld as a "right" city. It used to be a "good place to cool off in," is the way one professional put it. Other concentrations include Leavenworth Federal Prison (.04), Atlanta Federal Prison (.02) and the New Orleans area (.01).

Sometimes very small concentrations of the rhyming argot are discovered in isolated state prisons be-

cause prisoners released from a nearby Federal institution fall afoul of state authorities and introduce the argot into otherwise uncontaminated areas.

V

ANYONE can easily coin rhyming Argot. Try your hand at understanding a little synthetic creation, much more concentrated than one would ever find in criminal usage:

Yesterday I jollopps in a poverty-point down on the main field-of-wheat for a short oh-my-dear. I sits at a bottle-label and all at once I cup-a-tea a cute slim-dilly across the shovel-and-broom all by her Pat Malone. Her bonny-fair is sweet-bread, her sherry-flips the same, and she has a smart-and-simple in her Gunga Din. She looks a little glad-lad and I feels sort of larry-happy in the loaf-of-bread, so I gives her a mad-mile and she mad-miles right back.

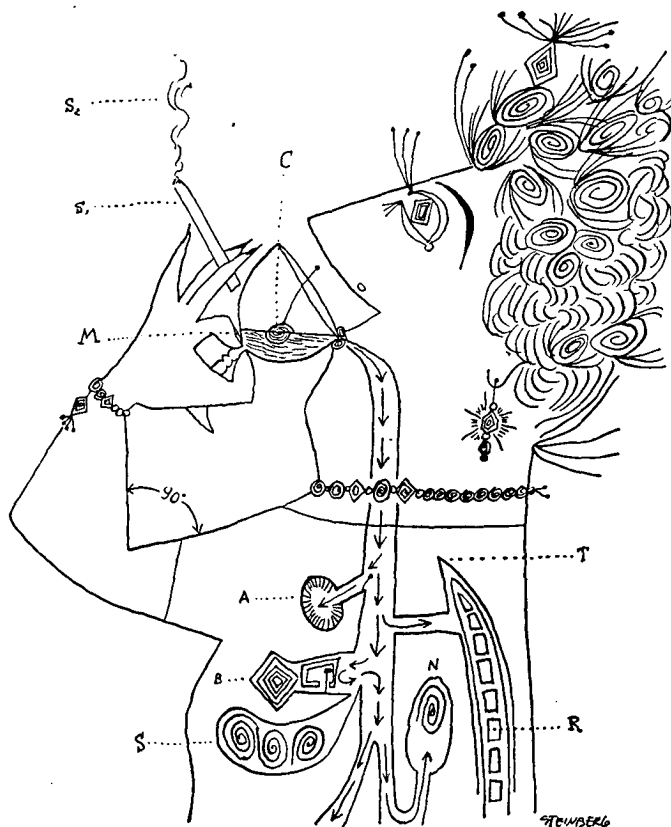
I ambles across the rolly-roar and offers her a sweet-marguerite. We starts a bowl-of-chalk and I ask her if she broken-dishes a tiddledy-wink. I orders a fine-and-dandy and she gets a strong-and-thin. I got twenty Charley Rollars in my sky-rockets, so we spends pretty-flowers having a bushy-park, nancy-prancing and crack-a-booming between tiddledy-winks.

Fads in slang, like styles in clothes or automobiles, pass on and off the American scene with almost monotonous regularity. When we get tired of a song, an old bonnet, some radio comic's musty gag-line, or a whole system of slang, we unceremoniously relegate it to the scrap heap with ruthless rapidity. This chameleon streak in our national character makes our speech pungent and vigorous.

Rhyming argot has certain odds in its favor in the ruthless struggle for recognition which all words wage. It is simple and easily coined. It could appeal to the mass-mind. As a system of argot it has already survived for more than a century in the toughest of all trial-fields — the underworld. It has spread over the country to dissemination-points in about half our states, where it has a tradition of usage

which goes back at least fifty years. It has seeped out into general speech in some areas, and into literary usage in film and fiction.

If it should blossom into sudden popularity, you need not be puzzled — as you probably are by jitterbug lingo — regarding its origin. You'll know that it isn't new and it isn't mysterious. It has simply lain dormant for a good long time.



DOWN TO EARTH

BY ALAN DEVOE

Dooryard Nature

AN INTEREST in natural history has the great advantage, over narrower or more special interests, that the materials for its satisfaction are always and everywhere at hand. Deprive a philatelist of his stamps and set him in a desert, and he is a sorry figure of deprivation and frustration. A balloonist, after all, has to be where there are balloons; a harpist can do very little in a harpless world; a bibliophile may easily be bereft, by the accidents of circumstance, of the objects of his enthusiasm. But it is impossible to be bereft of nature. Nature is everywhere. In whatever imaginable circumstances a naturalist may find himself, he always finds himself, so to speak, at home.

Only a few of us can be naturalists in the fullest sense, the professional sense, of the word. We may not have the scientific training to be laboratory experts, dissecting and classifying and peering learnedly through a microscope. We may be too chained to a job, or too old or too young or too fat or too asthmatic, to be field naturalists of the free and adventurous sort who go clambering up trees to eagles' eyries and slogging through swamps and jungles and Arctic blizzards in robust pursuit of the wonder of the world.

We cannot all see nature's most spectacular shows. We must leave it to the Carl Akeley's to watch elephants in their native haunts, and to the William Beebes to go plunging in bathyspheres into the strange, deep glory of the sea. But anyone, anywhere, can make a certain study of nature. Anyone, anywhere, can fix his eyes and mind upon *some* ingredient of the life of earth — some bird or mammal or fish or tree, some insect, some growth of moss in a cranny of rock — and, studying it steadfastly, can make the discovery that it abounds, no less than elephants and eagles, in an extraordinariness and fascination of its own.

ONCE, in a conversation with an old farmer who had been cutting some timber for me, I spoke to him of the astonishing fact that a tree largely feeds, almost literally, upon air. I spoke of the process whereby a tree, through the leaf-stomata that are collectively its "mouth," takes in carbon dioxide and gives off oxygen, decomposing the carbonic acid gas into its two elements and procuring the carbon which is the life-stuff of the flesh of the tree. I said: "It's a strange thing, isn't it?"

"Well," said the old man, his wise and ancient eyes roving over the sweep of the fields and hills and sky, "Well, it's no stranger than everything else."

PRECISELY. Elephants are very extraordinary things; and it is good to be able to go to the African forest and watch them. What occurs in an eagle's nest is indeed a matter that must excite a lively wonder. In the depths of Dr. Beebe's tropical seas there are creatures and happenings that may well entrance a watcher and "kindle his sense of amaze." But it is a prime truth of the natural world, and the basis of the endless satisfaction to be found in natural history, that truly nothing is any stranger than anything else. In all parts and particles, without exception, nature is an astonishment. An elephant is bigger than a water-beetle, and so may more readily stir the amazement of those sluggish in imagination; but it is not in fact any odder.

A man who looks through a microscope at a drop of water that has dripped from his own eaves looks into a world that is as awing as anything he could see if he journeyed to Patagonia. If what occurs in the inaccessible eyrie of eagles can put a man under a spell, so can what occurs in the handy nest of the robins on his bedroom window sill, if he will watch it attentively; or, for that matter, so can what occurs in the life history of the clothes-moths in his closet or the mice that proliferate in his cellar.

The joy of a naturalist is not unlike the joy of a metaphysician. The metaphysical sense of wonder consists in a wonder over the fact that anything exists at all (instead of there being only a blank, a nullity, a not-ness); and a man who has this awareness vividly can never have a dull moment in his life. What a naturalist discovers — to put the old farmer's profound philosophic observation in reverse — is that everything is as strange as everything else. It is not necessary to go to Africa to see a wonder of nature; there is a wonder of nature in the nearest lichen on the closest rock. It is not essential to be able to climb a tree, or scale a cliff, or follow in the striding footsteps of the Dan Beards and Ernest Thompson Setons and such robustious outdoorsmen. A man may sit in an invalid's chair and, watching only the small chipmunk on his small front lawn, peer as far and as fascinatingly into the secrets of animal life as he could ever penetrate if he were able to hike with as flamboyant an athleticism as Theodore Roosevelt himself.

IF WE are old or young, in health or beset by sickness, free to travel the prairie or confined all our days to one room, nature lies all around us and offers us the opportunity to investigate. Creation is all one piece, its parts interpenetrating and interdependent. And all the parts have this quality in common: that each is as strange as every other.

II

WHAT has prompted the saying of this is a small and commonplace event now happening. The event is the return, to those dooryards and window sills where they have in previous winters become accustomed to find food, of the little birds called downy woodpeckers. They are common little birds, and must be known by name to many people who can identify few species. They must be known to many thousands more who have never heard a name for them. A downy woodpecker is that little bird, white underneath, speckled black and white above, and (in the case of the male) marked with a daub of red on the nape of the neck, which from autumn to spring comes daily for a cheery rat-tat-tatting on any fragment of suet or similar tidbit that may have been put out as an attraction.

A downy woodpecker is of such common occurrence, and is so small, so lacking in lurid plumage or arresting song, that it may not often be considered more than casually by those who notice its return now in the frost-touched days of September and October to the vicinity of houses. But a nature-minded man, knowing that everything on this green-kirtled earth is as strange as everything else, will be able to find, in observing even so quiet and commonplace a bird as this, that it is as queer in its way as a flamingo. The enchantment of nature does not need seeking somewhere in a

far country. It is here, in the dooryard. The oddities are not all in Patagonia. They may be discovered, with a little watching, in a downy woodpecker.

There is the matter of the downy woodpecker's feet, for instance. They may look, at a glance, like the feet of other birds; but they are not. Instead of there being three toes in front and one in back, there are two forward and two backward. It is an extraordinary foot, an astonishing foot. It is as queer as the trunk of an elephant, an adaptation similarly special. It serves the downy woodpecker in clinging to bark, the curved claws gripping the surface, the long, side-spread hind-claws preventing the bird from swaying as it grips.

There are the holes that downy woodpeckers make in trees. They are commonplace enough. But, with investigation, there are discoveries to be made about them; and they can be discoveries, in their way, as exciting as anything Darwin discovered on the voyage of the *Beagle*. Not all the holes are nests. With the deepening of autumn, downy woodpeckers drill holes that are shelter-holes: a device to provide warm roosting-places in the bitter winter nights to come.

With regard to the nest itself, that foot-deep cavity in the dead branch or trunk of a tree, a patient investigator may find ample to entrance or surprise him. It is a cunning cavity, only an inch and a quarter or so at the opening, then widening to perhaps three inches, then narrowing again to

only two; and the bottom of it is lined with chips. It would be natural to suppose that the female makes it. But a man zealous enough in doorway natural history can discover that the preparation of the nest-hole is in fact the work of the male.

A DOWNY woodpecker's tail is not made of soft feathers, like those of most other birds. It is made of stiff spines which enable the woodpecker to prop itself against the tree it is clutching and hammering. A downy woodpecker's beak is not pointed, as most birds' are and as it looks to casual observation. At the tip it is flat-edged,

like a very fine chisel. A downy woodpecker's tongue, as it may reveal itself to a dooryard naturalist sufficiently intent, is no common tongue but has a horny tip equipped with recurved barbs, for spearing the grubs that the downy woodpecker finds in the interstices of the bark. A man who presses his interest in natural history to the point of willingness to dissect the body of a dead downy woodpecker may learn a further fact about the tongue which is at least as curious as any nature-fact he could find on the other side of the world. The tongue is not only barbed, but is prodigiously long. It needs to be, for grub-getting.



Downy Woodpecker

Frank Utpatel

But the mouth and throat of a downy woodpecker are small, too small to contain so extensive an organ. The tongue is not throat-rooted. The root is deep in a muscular sheath which curves up over the woodpecker's skull.

It is not intended to write here a whole natural history of downy woodpeckers. Whoever would know more of them has only to open his eyes and mind, and perhaps disburse a dime for a lump of suet, and be off upon his own exploration of the downies of his dooryard. But the coming back to feeding-stations, now, of the downy woodpeckers serves as reminder of the whole large matter of dooryard natural history in general, by which is meant the natural history of here-and-now, the natural history of the commonplace, the natural history of everyday. It is an interest that can fill

all a man's days with new enthusiasm, and light them with wonder. It is available to each of us, in this degree, to be a naturalist. For wherever we are, there is nature; and it is necessary only that we open our eyes to see it and stretch out our hand to touch it.

WE CANNOT all go to Africa to stalk elephants. But we can all see a downy woodpecker . . . or a cricket or a fruit-fly or a house-mouse or a gray squirrel or whatever it may be. And, if we watch closely, there is not any explorer in exotic places who can have more exciting revelations than become available to us. For it is true that the whole creation is all cast in the same mould of miraculousness; and it is true that indeed nothing within it is any stranger than anything else.



NO RECALL

By DAVID MORTON

THE heart, that has no gift for taking back
What it has given,
Nor any gift for living in long lack
Of a glimpsed heaven,

May be resigned, and still, and nearly brave,
But restored, never,
Knowing full well, at last, that what it gave
Is given forever.

HONOR

A Story

BY WILLIAM FAULKNER

I WALKED right through the ante-room without stopping. Miss West says, "He's in conference now," but I didn't stop. I didn't knock, either. They were talking and he quit and looked up across the desk at me.

"How much notice do you want to write me off?" I said.

"Write you off?" he said.

"I'm quitting," I said. "Will one day be notice enough?"

He looked at me, frog-eyed. "Isn't our car good enough for you to demonstrate?" he said. His hand lay on the desk, holding the cigar. He's got a ruby ring the size of a tail-light. "You've been with us three weeks," he says. "Not long enough to learn what that word on the door means."

He don't know it, but three weeks is pretty good; it's within two days of the record. And if three weeks is a record with him, he could have shaken

hands with the new champion without moving.

II

THE trouble is, I had never learned to do anything. You know how it was in those days, with even the college campuses full of British and French uniforms, and us all scared to death it would be over before we could get in and swank a pair of pilot's wings ourselves. And then to get in and find something that suited you right down to the ground, you see.

So after the Armistice I stayed in for a couple of years as a test pilot. That was when I took up wing-walking, to relieve the monotony. A fellow named Waldrup and I used to hide out at about three thousand on a Nine while I muscled around on top of it. Because Army life is pretty dull in peacetime: nothing to do but lay

WILLIAM FAULKNER, *one of the most eminent American short story writers and novelists, appeared in THE AMERICAN MERCURY at the very beginning of his career. This magazine, indeed, was perhaps the first national periodical of its class to print his fiction. This story, first published in the issue for July 1930, is the second in a series of reprints of outstanding material from past issues of the MERCURY. (Copyright, 1934, by Random House, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.)*

around and lie your head off all day and play poker all night. And isolation is bad for poker. You lose on tick, and on tick you always plunge.

THERE was a fellow named White lost a thousand one night. He kept on losing and I wanted to quit but I was winner and he wanted to play on, plunging and losing every pot. He gave me a check and I told him it wasn't any rush, to forget it, because he had a wife out in California. Then the next night he wanted to play again. I tried to talk him out of it, but he got mad. Called me yellow. So he lost fifteen hundred more that night.

Then I said I'd cut him, double or quit, one time. He cut a queen. So I said, "Well, that beats me. I won't even cut." And I flipped his cut over and riffled them and we saw a gob of face cards and three of the aces. But he insisted, and I said, "What's the use? The percentage would be against me, even with a full deck." But he insisted. I cut the case ace. I would have paid to lose. I offered again to tear up the checks, but he sat there and cursed me. I left him sitting at the table, in his shirt sleeves and his collar open, looking at the ace.

The next day we had the job, the speed ship. I had done everything I could. I couldn't offer him the checks again. I will let a man who is worked up curse me once. But I won't let him twice. So we had the job, the speed ship. I wouldn't touch it. He took it up five thousand feet and dived the

wings off at two thousand with a full gun.

So I was out again after four years, a civ again. And while I was still drifting around — that was when I first tried selling automobiles — I met Jack, and he told me about a bird that wanted a wing-walker for his barn-storming circus. And that was how I met her.

III

JACK — he gave me a note to Rogers — told me about what a good pilot Rogers was, and about her, how they said she was unhappy with him. "So is your old man," I said.

"That's what they say," Jack said. So when I saw Rogers and handed him the note — he was one of these lean, quiet-looking birds — I said to myself he was just the kind that would marry one of these flighty, passionate, good-looking women they used to catch during the war with a set of wings, and have her run out on him the first chance. So I felt safe. I knew she'd not have had to wait any three years for one like me.

So I expected to find one of these long, dark, snake-like women surrounded by ostrich plumes and Woolworth incense, smoking cigarettes on the divan while Rogers ran out to the corner delicatessen for sliced ham and potato salad on paper plates. But I was wrong. She came in with an apron on over one of these little pale squashy dresses, with flour or something on her arms, without apologiz-

ing or flurrying around or anything. She said Howard — that was Rogers — had told her about me and I said, “What did he tell you?” But she just said:

“I expect you’ll find this pretty dull for spending the evening, having to help cook your own dinner. I imagine you’d rather go out to dance with a couple of bottles of gin.”

“Why do you think that?” I said.

“Don’t I look like I could do anything else?”

“Oh, don’t you?” she said.

We had washed the dishes then and we were sitting in the firelight, with the lights off, with her on a cushion on the floor, her back against Rogers’ knees, smoking and talking, and she said, “I know you had a dull time. Howard suggested that we go out for dinner and to dance somewhere. But I told him you’d just have to take us as we are, first as well as later. Are you sorry?”

SHE could look about sixteen, especially in the apron. By that time she had bought one for me to wear, and the three of us would all go back to the kitchen and cook dinner. “We don’t expect you to enjoy doing this any more than we do,” she said. “It’s because we are so poor. We’re just an aviator.”

“Well, Howard can fly well enough for two people,” I said. “So that’s all right, too.”

“When he told me you were just a flyer too, I said, ‘My Lord, a wing-walker? When you were choosing a

family friend,’ I said, ‘why didn’t you choose a man we could invite to dinner a week ahead and not only count on his being there, but on his taking us out and spending his money on us?’ But he had to choose one that is as poor as we are.” And once she said to Rogers: “We’ll have to find Duck a girl, too. He’s going to get tired of just us some day.” You know how they say things like that: things that sound like they meant something until you look at them and find their eyes perfectly blank, until you wonder if they were even thinking about you, let alone talking about you.

Or maybe I’d have them out to dinner and a show. “Only I didn’t mean that like it sounded,” she said. “That wasn’t a hint to take us out.”

“Did you mean that about getting me a girl too?” I said.

Then she looked at me with that wide, blank, innocent look. That was when I would take them by my place for a cocktail — Rogers didn’t drink, himself — and when I would come in that night I’d find traces of powder on my dresser or maybe her handkerchief or something, and I’d go to bed with the room smelling like she was still there. She said: “Do you want us to find you one?” But nothing more was ever said about it, and after a while, when there was a high step or any of those little things which men do for women that means touching them, she’d turn to me like it was me was her husband and not him; and one night a storm caught us down town and we went to my place and she and

Rogers slept in my bed and I slept in a chair in the sitting-room.

ONE evening I was dressed to go out there when the 'phone rang. It was Rogers. "I am ——" he said, then something cut him off. It was like somebody had put a hand on his mouth, and I could hear them talking, murmuring: her, rather. "Well, what ——" Rogers says. Then I could hear her breathing into the mouthpiece, and she said my name.

"Don't forget you're to come out tonight," she said.

"I hadn't," I said. "Or did I get the date wrong? If this is not the night ——"

"You come on out," she said. "Good-bye."

When I got there he met me. His face looked like it always did, but I didn't go in. "Come on in," he said.

"Maybe I got the date wrong," I said. "So if you'll just ——"

He swung the door back. "Come on in," he said.

She was lying on the divan, crying. I don't know what; something about money. "I just can't stick it," she said. "I've tried and I've tried, but I just can't stand it."

"You know what my insurance rates are," he said. "If something happened, where would you be?"

"Where am I, anyway? What tenement woman hasn't got more than I have?" She hadn't looked up, lying there on her face, with the apron twisted under her. "Why don't you quit and do something that you can get a decent insurance rate, like other men?"

"I must be getting along," I said. I didn't belong there. I just got out. He came down to the door with me, and then we were both looking back up the stairs toward the door where she was lying on her face on the couch.

"I've got a little stake," I said. "I guess because I've eaten so much of your grub I haven't had time to spend it. So if it's anything urgent. . . ." We stood there, he holding the door open. "Of course, I wouldn't try to muscle in where I don't . . ."

"I wouldn't, if I were you," he said. He opened the door. "See you at the field tomorrow."

"Sure," I said. "See you at the field."

I didn't see her for almost a week, didn't hear from her. I saw him every day, and at last I said, "How's Mildred these days?"

"She's on a visit," he said. "At her mother's."

FOR the next two weeks I was with him every day. When I was out on top I'd look back at his face behind the goggles. But we never mentioned her name, until one day he told me she was home again and that I was invited out to dinner that night.

It was in the afternoon. He was busy all that day hopping passengers, so I was doing nothing, just killing time waiting for evening and thinking about her, wondering some, but mostly just thinking about her being home again, breathing the same smoke and soot I was breathing, when all of a

sudden I decided to go out there. It was plain as a voice saying, "Go out there. Now, at once." So I went. I didn't even wait to change. She was alone, reading before the fire. It was like gasoline from a broken line blazing up around you.

IV

IT WAS funny. When I'd be out on top I'd look back at his face behind the wind-screen, wondering what he knew. He must have known almost at once. Why, say, she didn't have any discretion at all. She'd say and do things, you know: insist on sitting close to me; touching me in that different way from when you hold an umbrella or a raincoat over them, and such that any man can tell at one look, when she thought he might not see: not when she knew he couldn't, but when she thought *maybe* he wouldn't. And when I'd unfasten my belt and crawl out I'd look back at his face and wonder what he was thinking, how much he knew or suspected.

I'd go out there in the afternoon when he was busy. I'd stall around until I saw that he would be lined up for the rest of the day, then I'd give some excuse and beat it. One afternoon I was all ready to go, waiting for him to take off, when he cut the gun and leaned out and beckoned me. "Don't go off," he said. "I want to see you."

So I knew he knew then, and I waited until he made the last hop and was taking off his monkey suit in the

office. He looked at me and I looked at him. "Come out to dinner," he said.

WHEN I came in they were waiting: She had on one of those little squashy dresses and she came and put her arms around me and kissed me with him watching.

"I'm going with you," she said. "We've talked it over and have both agreed that we couldn't love one another any more after this and that this is the only sensible thing to do. Then he can find a woman he can love, a woman that's not bad like I am."

He was looking at me, and she running her hands over my face and making a little moaning sound against my neck, and me like a stone or something. Do you know what I was thinking? I wasn't thinking about her at all. I was thinking that he and I were upstairs and me out on top and I had just found that he had thrown the stick away and was flying her on the rudder alone and that he knew that I knew the stick was gone and so it was all right now, whatever happened. So it was like a piece of wood with another piece of wood leaning against it, and she held back and looked at my face.

"Don't you love me any more?" she said, watching my face. "If you love me, say so. I have told him everything."

I wanted to be out of there. I wanted to run. I wasn't scared. It was because it was all kind of hot and dirty. I wanted to be away from her a

little while, for Rogers and me to be out where it was cold and hard and quiet, to settle things.

"What do you want to do?" I said. "Will you give her a divorce?"

She was watching my face very closely. Then she let me go and she ran to the mantel and put her face into the bend of her arm, crying.

"You were lying to me," she said. "You didn't mean what you said. Oh God, what have I done?"

You know how it is. Like there is a right time for everything. Like nobody is anything in himself: like a woman, even when you love her, is a woman to you just a part of the time and the rest of the time she is just a person that don't look at things the same way a man has learned to. Don't have the same ideas about what is decent and what is not. So I went over and stood with my arms about her, thinking, "God damn it, if you'll just keep out of this for a little while! We're both trying our best to take care of you, so it won't hurt you."

Because I loved her, you see. Nothing can marry two people closer than a mutual sin in the world's eyes. And he had had his chance. If it had been me that knew her first and married her and he had been me, I would have had my chance. But it was him that had had it, so when she said, "Then say what you tell me when we are alone. I tell you I have told him everything," I said:

"Everything? Have you told him everything?" He was watching us.

"Has she told you everything?" I said.

"It doesn't matter," he said. "Do you want her?" Then before I could speak, he said: "Do you love her? Will you be good to her?"

His face was gray-looking, like when you see a man again after a long time and you say, "Good God, is that Rogers?" When I finally got away the divorce was all settled.

V

SO THE next morning when I reached the field, Harris, the man who owned the flying circus, told me about the special job; I had forgotten it, I suppose. Anyway, he said he had told me about it. Finally I said I wouldn't fly with Rogers.

"Why not?" Harris said.

"Ask him," I said.

"If he agrees to fly you, will you go up?"

So I said yes. And then Rogers came out; he said that he would fly me. And so I believed that he had known about the job all the time and had laid for me, sucked me in. We waited until Harris went out. "So this is why you were so mealy-mouthed last night," I said. I cursed him. "You've got me now, haven't you?"

"Take the stick yourself," he said. "I'll do your trick."

"Have you ever done any work like this before?"

"No. But I can, as long as you fly her properly."

I cursed him. "You feel good," I

said. "You've got me. Come on; grin on the outside of your face. Come on!"

He turned and went to the crate and began to get into the front seat. I went and caught his shoulder and jerked him back. We looked at one another.

"I won't hit you now," he said, "if that's what you want. Wait till we get down again."

"No," I said. "Because I want to hit back once."

We looked at one another; Harris was watching us from the office.

"All right," Rogers said. "Let me have your shoes, will you? I haven't got any rubber soles out here."

"Take your seat," I said. "What the hell does it matter? I guess I'd do the same thing in your place."

THE job was over an amusement park, a carnival. There must have been twenty-five thousand of them down there, like colored ants. I took chances that day that I had never taken, chances you can't see from the ground. But every time the ship was right under me, balancing me against side pressure and all, like he and I were using the same mind. I thought he was playing with me, you see. I'd look back at his face, yelling at him: "Come on; now you've got me. Where are your guts?"

I was a little crazy, I guess. Anyway, when I think of the two of us up there, yelling back and forth at one another, and all the little bugs watching and waiting for the big show, the loop. He could hear me, but I couldn't hear

him; I could just see his lips moving. "Come on," I'd yell; "shake the wing a little; I'll go off easy, see?"

I was a little crazy. You know how it is, how you want to rush into something you know is going to happen, no matter what it is. I guess lovers and suicides both know that feeling. I'd yell back at him: "You want it to look all right, eh? And to lose me off the level ship wouldn't look so good, would it? All right," I yelled, "let's go." I went back to the center section and cast the rope loose where it loops around the forward jury struts and I got set against it and looked back at him and gave him the signal.

I WAS a little crazy. I was still yelling at him; I don't know what I was yelling. I thought maybe I had already fallen off and was dead and didn't know it. The wires began to whine and I was looking straight down at the ground and the little colored dots. Then the wires were whistling proper and he gunned her and the ground began to slide back under the nose. I waited until it was gone and the horizon had slid back under too and I couldn't see anything but sky. Then I let go one end of the rope and jerked it out and threw it back at his head and held my arms out as she zoomed into the loop.

I wasn't trying to kill myself. I wasn't thinking about myself. I was thinking about him. Trying to show him up like he had shown me up. Give him something he must fail at like he had given me something I

failed at. I was trying to break him.

We were over the loop before he lost me. The ground had come back, with the little colored dots, and then the pressure went off my soles and I was falling. I made a half somersault and was just going into the first turn of a flat spin, with my face to the sky, when something banged me in the back. It knocked the wind out of me, and for a second I must have been completely out. Then I opened my eyes and I was lying on my back on the top wing, with my head hanging over the back edge.

I was too far down the slope of the camber to bend my knees over the leading edge, and I could feel the wing creeping under me. I didn't dare move. I knew that if I tried to sit up against the slip stream, I would go off backward. I could see by the tail and the horizon that we were upside now, in a shallow dive, and I could see Rogers standing up in his cockpit, unfastening his belt, and I could turn my head a little more and see that when I went off I would miss the fuselage altogether, or maybe hit it with my shoulder.

So I lay there with the wing creeping under me, feeling my shoulders beginning to hang over space, counting my backbones as they crept over the edge, watching Rogers crawl forward along the fuselage toward the front seat. I watched him for a long time, inching himself along against the pressure, his trouser-legs whipping. After a while I saw his legs slide into

the front cockpit and then I felt his hands on me.

THERE was a fellow in my squadron. I didn't like him and he hated my guts. All right. One day he got me out of a tight jam when I was caught ten miles over the lines with a blowing valve. When we were down he said, "Don't think I was just digging you out. I was getting a Hun, and I got him." He cursed me, with his goggles cocked up and his hands on his hips, cursing me like he was smiling. But that's all right. You're each on a Camel; if you go out, that's too bad; if he goes out, it's just too bad. Not like when you're on the center section and he's at the stick, and just by stalling her for a second or ruddering her a little at the top of the loop.

But I was young, then. Good Lord, I used to be young! I remember Armistice night in '18, and me chasing all over Amiens with a lousy prisoner we had brought down that morning on an Albatross, trying to keep the frog M.P.'s from getting him. He was a good guy, and those damned infantrymen wanting to stick him in a pen full of S. O. S. and ginned-up cooks and such. I felt sorry for the bastard, being so far from home and licked and all. I was sure young.

We were all young. I remember an Indian, a prince, an Oxford man, with his turban and his trick major's pips, that said we were all dead that fought in the war. "You will not know it," he said, "but you are all dead. With this difference: those out there" —

jerking his arm toward where the front was — “do not care, and you do not know it.” And something else he said, about breathing for a long time yet, some kind of walking funerals: catafalques and tombs and epitaphs of men that died on the fourth of August, 1914, without knowing that they had died, he said. He was a card, queer. A good little guy, too.

BUT I wasn't quite dead while I was lying on the top wing of that Standard and counting my backbones as they crawled over the edge like a string of ants, until Rogers grabbed me. And when he came to the station that night to say goodbye, he brought me a letter from her, the first I ever had. The handwriting looked exactly like her; I could almost smell the scent she used and feel her hands touching me. I tore it in two without opening it and threw the pieces down. But he picked them up and gave them back to me. “Don't be a fool,” he said.

And that's all. They've got a kid now, a boy of six. Rogers wrote me; about six months afterward the letter caught up with me. I'm his godfather. Funny to have a godfather that's never seen you and that you'll never see, isn't it?

VI

SO I said to Reinhardt: “Will one day be enough notice?”

“One minute will be enough,” he said. He pressed the buzzer. Miss West came in. She is a good kid. Now and

then, when I'd just have to blow off some steam, she and I would have lunch at the dairy place across the street, and I could tell her about them, about the women. They are the worst. You know; you get a call for a demonstration, and there'll be a whole car full of them waiting on the porch and we'd pile in and all go shopping. Me dodging around in the traffic, hunting a place to park, and her saying, “John insisted that I try this car. But what I tell him, it's foolish to buy a car that is as difficult to find parking space for as this one appears to be.” And then watching the back of my head with that bright, hard, suspicious way. God knows what they thought we had; maybe one that would fold up like a deck chair and lean against a fire plug. But hell, I couldn't sell hair straightener to the widow of a nigger railroad accident.

So Miss West comes in; she is a good kid, only somebody told her I had had three or four other jobs in a year without sticking, and that I used to be a war pilot, and she'd keep on after me about why I quit flying and why I didn't go back to it, now that crates were more general, since I wasn't much good at selling automobiles or at anything else, like women will. You know: urgent and sympathetic, and you can't shut them up like you could a man; she came in and Reinhardt says, “We are letting Mr. Monaghan go. Send him to the cashier.”

“Don't bother,” I said. “Keep it to buy yourself a hoop with.”

THE LIBRARY

Some American Novelists

BY GRANVILLE HICKS

THE CLOCK in Robert Frost's poem "proclaimed the time is neither wrong nor right." This is a bracing faith for a poet or novelist, but a critic may be allowed to remain skeptical. It is a good thing to believe, and it may even be true, that genius can create art in the most difficult and troubled times, but the general level of creative life is a different matter. There are good times and bad times, and this period is not good. One of the familiar but nonetheless accurate ways of describing its badness is to say that it is a period in which writers can take almost nothing for granted. There is no set of values that a writer can accept. There is not even a set with which he can quarrel. He has to create his values as he goes along, and hope that he can win the acceptance of his readers.

I have been reading a number of novels published this spring and summer, and I have selected five of them for discussion here. They have nothing in common except confusion.

But if the various authors get an even start, they are pretty well spread out at the finish line.

We have another autobiographical novel by James T. Farrell, another historical novel-with-a-purpose by Howard Fast, another satire on nice people by Helen Howe, and a latter-day *All Brides Are Beautiful* by Thomas Bell. And then, quite in a class by itself, we have Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*. If Mr. Farrell continues to fight it out on the old line, if Mr. Fast and Mr. Bell have contented themselves with a cause, if Miss Howe can't seem to establish a point of view, Mr. Warren has something to say and a way of saying it.

IN GENERAL neither the virtues nor the shortcomings of James Farrell's *Bernard Clare*¹ can surprise readers of his earlier work. Having brought Danny O'Neill to the age of twenty-one and taken him out of Chicago, Farrell has re-christened him Bernard

¹ \$2.75. *Vanguard*.

GRANVILLE HICKS has recently completed a book on life in a small town, to be published this fall. He is the author of a novel, *Only One Storm*, and several critical and biographical works, including *The Great Tradition*, *Figures of Transition* and *I Like America*.

Clare and started him on his career as a struggling writer in New York. The book carries Bernard through six months, two jobs, one love affair, the writing of two short stories, and hundreds of meditations on the meaninglessness of life. If Farrell continues at this rate, the Bernard Clare series will make the Studs Lonigan trilogy look like a miniature.

There are passages in the book that show Farrell at his best: the description of the crowd in Union Square on the night of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti; scenes in the library, the cheap hotel, the cigar store, the YMCA; certain of Bernard's experiences as salesman for a directory; a couple of drunken brawls. But mostly there is just Bernard, who wants a woman, who has decided that life has no meaning, who passionately desires to become a great writer. It is to Farrell's credit, of course, that he hasn't prettified Bernard, hasn't tried to make him wiser or more interesting or less offensive than James T. Farrell himself was at the age of twenty-one. The mature Farrell is not so very far removed from the egregiously unsophisticated and self-conscious youth portrayed in the novel.

At one of the times when he is "vaguely philosophizing" in his journal, Bernard asks a question: "Dare I write about myself?" Naïve as the passage sounds, there is no more important question that a writer can ask. To begin with, Farrell didn't write directly about himself. Rather, he chose to polish off the type of tough

young Irishman that he had feared and envied in his boyhood. But then, having disposed of Studs Lonigan, he was ready for Danny O'Neill and Bernard Clare.

A FEW sentences in Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men* seem relevant to the case of James T. Farrell. The narrator, Jack Burden, is trying to explain to his mother the character of the political boss for whom he works.

"He's interested in Willie," he says. "Quite simply and directly. And when anybody is interested in himself quite simply and directly the way Willie is interested in Willie you call it genius."

Nothing is easier than to point out the faults of Farrell's novels: the ruthlessly heavy-handed preoccupation with trivial details, the lack of perspective, the uncouthness and the vanity. But his egotism is combined, as egotism seldom is, with passionate honesty. Comparing him with Joyce, whom he so much admires, one can see that certain kinds of truth are beyond him, but he is incapable of falsehood, and that immediately raises him above a host of more adroit novelists.

Farrell is interested in philosophy and politics, but I cannot see that his beliefs have much effect upon his writing. His working faith has only two articles: the importance of James T. Farrell and the importance of honest writing. It has carried him no inconsiderable distance.

II

HOWARD FAST's doggedness reminds one of Farrell; and Fast, like Farrell, gets his effects by sheer force of will rather than by conspicuous literary graces. In their subject matter, however, they differ as much as two authors could, for Fast has made himself a specialist in the long-ago. There is also a fundamental difference in character: whereas Farrell has a stubborn reverence for fact, the most important fact being, of course, James T. Farrell, Fast has an irresistible longing for causes and dogmas.

Taken as a biography — and it comes close to being just that — *The American*² is a partisan account of the life of John Peter Altgeld. Mr. Fast's thesis is that Altgeld, after a hard struggle for success in politics and law, became a great democrat in the Jefferson-Jackson-Lincoln tradition, but fell short of taking the final and necessary step of becoming a socialist. In the period of Browderism, I feel sure, Fast would have accepted Altgeld as an unblemished hero, but now that the abolition of capitalism is once more part of the body of Communist doctrine, Altgeld can be no more than a John the Baptist or perhaps a Moses, permitted to see the Promised Land (as revealed by Eugene Debs) but not to enter in.

As a novel *The American* is better than Fast's political theories. He doesn't see all the way 'round Altgeld,

not by any means, but the man does have more than one dimension. Many of the early scenes are sharply drawn, and even the later, more than life-size, Altgeld isn't portrayed as a noble creature with unmixed motives and a pure faith in political platitudes. Fast's account of Altgeld's conversion isn't wholly satisfying, but at least he has sense enough to see that there is always an element of mystery in such events, and he doesn't try to explain the inexplicable. *The American*, in short, isn't so flat a piece of simplification as Fast's earlier *Freedom Road*.

THE mistakes and distortions in *The American's* description of Altgeld's career may be left to the historians, who for once seem to be taking Fast seriously enough to check up on his errors. What disturbs me is the novel's failure to get at the rôle of the politician in our democracy. We have had many men like Altgeld, men who convinced the voters that they were on the side of the people and not on the side of the beneficiaries of the capitalist system. Whether one regards such men as demagogues or prophets, they are important and fascinating, and though the historian can tell us what they do, only the novelist can help us to understand why they do it. The character of the people's politician, however, is a complicated matter, and Fast, who must have his heroes, wants to keep things simple and clear.

Malcolm Cowley once said that Fast was our best writer of juvenile

²§3. Duell, Sloan and Pearce.

fiction, and the comment is close to the mark. If, however, his novels are not serious in a literary sense, his intentions are of the utmost seriousness, and it is quite extraordinary that he has interested so large a public in historical novels that are neither romantic nor sexy. There is a quality in the man that makes his stories drive ahead. The thing that Fast gets best in *The American* is the stubbornness with which such a man as Altgeld, having for whatever reasons made his decision, follows through to the end. The same stubbornness is in Fast, and if it is typical of his simple-mindedness that he should embrace the dogmas of Communism, it is typical of his courage that he should take his stand openly.

III

DESPITE John Chamberlain, who used to look on him as the white hope of non-Communist proletarian literature, Thomas Bell seems to have wound up with the fellow-travelers if not the faithful. At least the hero and heroine of *There Comes a Time*³ are taking courses at the Jefferson School when the story ends. Joel Pane, the hero, seems quite unaware of the presence of Communists in the United Office and Professional Workers of America and in the American Labor Party, and perhaps he is equally blind to the fact that the Jefferson School is a Communist institution, but one cannot assume that Bell is so ignorant.

Joel and Nancy, as a matter of fact, are the kind of persons that Communists, back in the old democratic front days, were always dreaming of finding: good normal Americans who had learned in their own way that all the things the Communists said were true but had never been touched by Communism itself. The whole theory of the democratic front assumed that such persons existed, and one was always searching for them. But whenever one found somebody who looked the part, he turned out to be a comrade from way back.

Whatever Bell's political opinions — and his stated views are on the naïve side — he still writes engagingly on the intimacies of married life. Indeed, he stands almost alone as a novelist who can make a happy marriage interesting. Joel and Nancy are, at least in their domestic relations, the hero and heroine of *All Brides Are Beautiful* some fifteen years later, and Bell does as well with them as he did with Peter and Susan. They get along very pleasantly in bed and not so badly out, and are altogether credible and likable people.

The point of the story is that Joel, at the age of forty, begins to wonder what life is all about. He feels the loneliness of New York and the emptiness of his work in a bank. The organization of a union in the bank increases his self-respect, gives him a chance to use talents that are atrophying and restores to him a purpose in life. When the story closes, he is trying to figure out what the human race will do when

³\$2.50. Little, Brown.

everybody in the world "has a good job that leaves him lots of time to do what he likes, and a nice home with all the modern conveniences, and is able to give his kids all the advantages."

One has no business condescending to such optimism as Mr. Bell's, and in a way one must respect him for standing so firmly against the modern mood. Naïve despair is no more admirable than naïve cheerfulness, and these days it is a good deal more common. One couldn't quarrel at all with Mr. Bell's dream if people hadn't made such bloody messes in trying to realize just such visions. It is not what Mr. Bell hopes for but his apparent unawareness of the hazards that makes his philosophizing so uncomfortably shallow.

IV

AFTER such novels as *Bernard Clare* and *The American*, Helen Howe's *We Happy Few*⁴ seems almost a miracle of dexterous writing and penetrating observation. In spite of these qualities, however, it turns out to be quite a bad novel. After a nice beginning in the quiet circles of an exclusive preparatory school, it goes on to a long section about Harvard. Although some of the Harvard characters are obviously synthetic, the account of a Cambridge clique has large elements of truth in it, and the satire is often sharp. But Miss Howe is not content to stop there: she must show her

heroine that Cambridge is not America and thus convince her of her own and her clique's unworthiness. The best one can say of these latter sections is that they are well meant.

Both *The Whole Heart* and *We Happy Few* demonstrate that Miss Howe does possess those talents for satire on which she clearly prides herself. Some of the quietly effective passages in both books, however, suggest that she might be happier if she were less ambitious. Satire has to be written from a point of view, and that is why, in a period that seems to clamor for it, there is so little good satirical writing. A point of view is just what Miss Howe lacked when she began the book, and so she set off in search of one. Placing her Harvard coterie against the background of the nation's vastness and variety, she convinces us, if we need convincing, that the coterie's values are wrong, but she leaves us and herself in a hopeless confusion as to what values are right.

V

LIKE John Dos Passos' *Number One*, Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*⁵ was inspired by the character and career of Huey Long, although Warren takes plenty of liberties, just as Dos Passos did. Again like Dos Passos, Warren sees clearly the problem Fast dodged in *The American* — the problem of the leader-demagogue. Warren, however, does

⁴\$2.75, Simon and Schuster.

⁵\$3, Harcourt, Brace.

more with the problem than Dos Passos managed to do, and in that respect and in almost every other his is a better book than *Number One*. Indeed, it is such a good book that it puts Warren in the very front rank of American novelists.

Number One is a study of betrayal, the betrayal of an intellectual by a practical politician who lets nothing stand in the way of his conquest of power. *All the King's Men* is a poet-novelist's inquiry into the meaning of history, the meaning of human life itself. Dos Passos' Chuck Crawford may, for all I know, be closer to the real Huey Long than Warren's Willie Stark, but as a character in a novel Willie is more complicated, more convincing, and vastly more interesting than Chuck.

Jack Burden, the narrator of *All the King's Men*, is also a more significant character than Tyler Spotswood, from whose point of view *Number One* is told. Both are déclassé intellectuals who have attached themselves to political bosses, partly because of disillusionment with the ineffectuality of the liberals and the hypocrisy of the respectables, partly because of a remnant of idealism. Tyler fits into the story well enough, but he is too corrupt and too superficial to render all the subtleties of the situation. Jack Burden, on the other hand, not only performs his appropriate rôle in the story of Willie Stark but makes the perfect spokesman for the author. His sensibilities are not dulled, and it is right that his quest for meaning

should become the novel's dominant theme.

The first problem of *All the King's Men* is one to which Lincoln Steffens devoted his life, the problem of the political boss. Willie Stark is not a gentleman; his methods are immoral; his egotistic drive for power is boundless. But he gets things done. The second problem is that of Shaw's early plays: in a corrupt society there is no such thing as freedom from guilt. Shaw and Steffens found the same answer to their respective problems: change the system. Warren does not say anything about socialism, but the whole novel demonstrates that it is not enough to alter the rules of the game. Jack Burden's immediate response to his climactic disillusionment is an acceptance of blind materialism — "the dream that all life is but the dark heave of blood and the twitch of the nerve." In time he rejects this dream. He does not say — he cannot say explicitly — what he puts in its place, but he has come to terms with himself, and he can go on living.

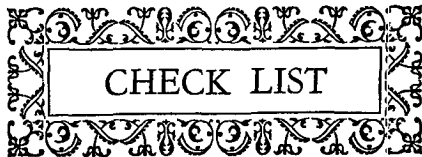
It is a temptation to write at length about Warren's ideas, but to do so would be unfair to so rich a piece of fiction as *All the King's Men*. Warren has given his narrator a colloquial and yet sophisticated style that is wholly appropriate to Jack Burden and beautifully suited to the purposes of the novel. Warren keeps as close to common speech as Dos Passos in his best vein, but his prose rises when necessary into brilliant but unforced imagery, and it takes on dignity as

Burden's character changes and the demands of the story grow more intense. It is a prose that is never mannered and yet never lapses into stylelessness.

Although the novel is broad in its scope, the structure is skillfully fashioned, and there is a steady rise from climax to climax. One long interlude, the story of Cass Mastern, who died in the Civil War, seems irrelevant, albeit impressive, at the time one reads it, but its place in the novel is established before the end. As in his earlier novel, *At Heaven's Gate*, Warren shows a surprising knowledge of political and economic affairs — surprising, that is, for a poet and professor — but details of this order are never introduced for their own sake. In every paragraph of the book there is a sense of mastery, which can be given only by high craftsmanship.

In some parts of *At Heaven's Gate* a kind of murkiness suggested William Faulkner. In *All the King's Men* everything is clear, subtle but clear. This is not to say that Warren is a better writer than Faulkner but merely that he has found his own line. He has taken a field for himself, too, an important one. *All the King's Men*, like its predecessor, could be called a social novel, but Warren has discovered that the so-called social problem cannot stand by itself, and he has had the courage to tackle the social problem and the moral problem and the philosophical problem all together. What he makes of them each reader will have to decide for himself.

At least the book demonstrates that values are not handed down from on high, nor dreamed up by ambitious social planners, but discovered by men of insight and integrity.



BIOGRAPHY

THE LOWELLS AND THEIR SEVEN WORLDS, by Ferris Greenslet. \$4.00. *Houghton Mifflin*. Along with the Adamses, the Lowells have formed one of the oldest and most celebrated families in our annals. "It is not easy to think of another American family," says Mr. Greenslet, "that has done more for its country through a longer period on a higher level." The Lowells have enriched almost every branch of intellectual endeavor — science, theology, literature, education, the law. Mr. Greenslet discusses them individually and assesses their contributions to national life fully — with obvious admiration yet critically. Perhaps his best section is on Amy Lowell, whom he knew and respected but whose artistic deficiencies he also knew and here sets down pretty bluntly. Mr. Greenslet calls his book "not so much the success story of a family as a chronicle play of New England history for three centuries, seen through the family's eyes and dramatized in its actions." He has succeeded admirably. Indeed, he has written one of the best family biographies in our literature. There are many fine illustrations, a chronological chart, and a truly good index.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON, by Nathan Schachner. \$4.00. *Appleton-Century*. This may well be the best biography of Hamilton that has yet appeared. It is based upon vast research — many of the documents consulted are fresh — it reveals a thorough knowledge of the surrounding historical territory, it is obviously free of any political or economic bias, and it is written with

remarkable clarity and force. Hamilton emerges from it as a statesman of the very first magnitude, and also as a man of great romantic appeal as well as of some rather grave human frailties. There are so many excellent points to this biography that it is difficult to single out any one; but perhaps special mention should be made of Mr. Schachner's treatment of *The Federalist*; it is a little masterpiece of objective exposition. A good bibliography and index are appended.

FROM THE BANKS OF THE VOLGA. The Life of Maxim Gorky, by A. Roskin. \$2.00. *Philosophical Library*. This book was first published in Russia last year. It contains nothing that has not appeared elsewhere, and the writing, at least in the translation by D. L. Fromberg, is very jerky. There is one reproduction of a painting by V. Yefanov that will come as something of a surprise to most students of Russian literature. It portrays the ill Gorky surrounded by three men who have hitherto kept their interest in literary art in the background — Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov.

BEATRICE WEBB, by Margaret Cole. \$3.00. *Harcourt, Brace*. Mrs. Webb (1858-1943) was one of the most remarkable women of modern times. Along with her husband, Sidney Webb, she was one of the most profound economists of our day and her contributions to liberal philosophy are of the first magnitude. Her major error, made late in her life, was in being taken in by the bogus Soviet democracy, but even that was more an error of the heart than of the head. Mrs. Cole's biography is far from impartial; it is rather an appreciation, and as such is a valuable volume.

POETRY

DUBLIN POEMS, by Seumas O'Sullivan. \$2.00. *Creative Age*. Mr. O'Sullivan is one of the most lyrical and moving of all living Irish poets. He sings the sad moments and the mounting regrets of life. He is most at home at twilight and in the shadows of dreams and hopes. Indeed, the best section in this excellent book is entitled "The Twilight People." Perhaps the other Irish poet most like him in poetical impulse is the James Joyce of *Chamber Music*, though O'Sullivan is a bit more expansive and he is not afraid of using a

small symphony on occasion. There is a brief introductory note by Padraic Colum.

AGAINST THE CIRCLE, by Brewster Ghiselin. \$2.00. *Dutton*. Mr. Ghiselin, one of the younger poets with something of a reputation in poetical circles, obviously has something to say, but he strains so hard for images and has so feeble a command of metrical form that hardly any of his verses really succeed. Even "Bath of Aphrodite" and "Summer Noon," perhaps the best in the volume, wobble here and there for sheer lack of complete intelligibility.

MY TALON IN YOUR HEART, by Nancy Bruff. \$2.00. *Dutton*. Miss Bruff, author of the "novel" *The Manatee*, has literary passion of a sort, but it is immature or merely "intense." Here, for example, is the first half of "Dainty Prison": "A Young girl is a porcelain stove/ Containing flame / When she would utter passionate words / Revealing her unique, her only self / She says breathless and / Conventional nothings."

FICTION

IVY GRIPPED THE STAIRS AND OTHER STORIES, by Elizabeth Bowen. \$2.50. *Knopf*. The twelve stories here all deal with wartime England, but they are not "war stories" in the accepted sense. The war is nearly always in the background, as one of the ultimate reasons for the pathologic cheeriness of this character or the flood of introspection coming over another. Love, hate, futility, and despair are all personified here, but it is difficult to say that any one of the tales really establishes a vitality of its own. Part of the blame can perhaps be found in Miss Bowen's stilted language: "Maria gave Henry an askance look. . . . At an intimate distance along the passage. . . . Ivy gripped and sucked at the flight of steps, down which with such a deceptive wildness it seemed to be flowing like a cascade." (Some critics, strangely enough, have called this sort of language style.) Another reason for the failure of these stories is Miss Bowen's apparent unwillingness to dig very deeply into her characters. She seems to think that to portray confusion in a person's heart is to say something very profound about that person.

THERE WERE TWO PIRATES, by James Branch Cabell. \$3.00. *Farrar, Straus*. This is a retelling, with some alteration, of the commercial and love affairs of a Spanish pirate who did business in and around Florida a long time ago. One wonders why Mr. Cabell bothered. Here are displayed again many of the author's old devices, the old burnished prose which frequently slips into super-elegance, the old fondness for elevating a story of various kinds of violence onto a level of romantic elegance — and to what point it would be difficult to imagine. What Mr. Cabell has to say in these 121 pages he has said a number of times — and much more effectively than he has here. John O'Hara has most fittingly designed and illustrated the book: which is to say, he has over-decorated it in a much-ado-about-nothing, decoration-for-its-own-sake style.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

THE NUREMBERG TRIAL AND AGGRESSIVE WAR, by Sheldon Glueck. \$2.00. *Knopf*. The professor of criminal law and criminology at Harvard is here concerned chiefly with the problem of the legality of the trials of the war criminals of World War II. He delves deeply and with vast learning into the relevant precedents and comes to the conclusion that "the waging of an aggressive war is not only unlawful but also criminal, and that there is nothing fundamentally 'retrospective' or unjust either in recognizing this fact or in holding individual members of a government personally liable for criminal acts committed in the name of the state." There is a foreword by Justice Robert H. Jackson, United States chief of counsel at the Nuremberg trial.

THE FUTURE IN PERSPECTIVE, by Sigmund Neumann. \$3.50. *Putnam's*. Here is a good brief rehearsal of the history of our times, beginning with World War I. It describes this period as a Second Thirty Years War, with nationalism and social revolution substituted for the religious conflict of the First. Mr. Neumann successfully reveals a developing pattern in the story he has to tell, and he tells it in a manner refreshingly free from dogmatism of any kind, though one might object that his tone is more cheerful than a sharp look at the current international scene would seem to warrant.

MISCELLANEOUS

A BOOK ABOUT A THOUSAND THINGS, by George Stimpson. \$3.50. *Harper*. This is one of the most extraordinary and fascinating books published in years. It is a grab-bag of information on almost all topics under the sun (and beyond). Here, for example, are some of the topics discussed: Is it improper to wash a United States flag? What country was moved on the map from South to North America? Why is a horse called "dobbin"? What was the big wind of Ireland? What causes the ticking sound in wood? How is "Eyre" pronounced in *Jane Eyre*? Why do gunners open their mouths when firing cannon? The book seems to have no scheme of organization, but perhaps that is one of its additional virtues. It is perfect reading at any time when one feels intellectual in, so to speak, a non-intellectual way. The only trouble is that if one dips into it at bedtime one is likely still to be reading it when the milkman makes his rounds.

KEEP IT CRISP, by S. J. Perelman. \$2.50. *Random House*. It's no good putting Mr. Perelman down as simply a humorist, even as a very good humorist: this latest collection of satires, burlesques and other exercises of Perelmanism adds up to incisive and frequently devastating comment on social and cultural aspects of our times. The aim, to be sure, is always primarily to amuse, but the results are educational as often as not. This volume includes pieces on American advertising, high-toned movie criticism, the tough-and-rough school of detective-story writing, radio advice programs, women's magazines, etc., etc. The level is uniformly high.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN READER, edited by Ray B. West, Jr. \$3.50. *Dutton*. This is a collection of thirty-eight essays, stories, and poems dealing with the Rocky Mountain region — Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming and Colorado. Except for the poems, which are feeble, the book makes informative and dramatic reading. The editor's introduction is a brief literary history of the region and is a model of such writing. Mr. West is co-editor of the *Rocky Mountain Review*, one of the most lively and best edited of the "little" magazines.

THE OPEN FORUM

THE GOVERNMENT'S SALARIES

SIR: Many thanks for your enlightening article, "False Economy in Government," by John J. Corson, which appeared in the August [1946] *MERCURY*. Having just completed three years in the Federal Civil Service, I am in a position to say that Mr. Corson's conclusions are flawless. The public believes that the Civil Service is a refuge for the inefficient. However, even private enterprise hires a percentage of unprofitable employees. But the fact is that conditions of government employment are so depressing that Federal jobs can appeal to no one of any intelligence. It would seem that eventually, unless the Federal Civil Service Commission becomes educated to the facts, all the government's sensible employees will be replaced by dolts.

PAUL J. KORS

Brooklyn, N. Y.

SIR: Mr. Corson's article on "False Economy in Government" voices two serious fallacies: that the government pay is only the dollars paid; and that public service loses when able officials leave. On the contrary, government salaries are, for such positions as the article cited, more dollars than employees were getting before entering public service plus a springboard to higher dollar pay either in government or in private business. On the contrary again, history shows that as a rule successors improve upon predecessors' records.

The resigned budget director has lost no money by having served the Federal government. Fiorello H. LaGuardia lost no money by going into public service. There is no more reason for government's competing with private business in money lure for service than for universities' paying students what they might be earning if in business instead of preparing for bigger and bigger-paying posts.

WILLIAM H. ALLEN

New York City.

SIR: Mr. Allen and I do not disagree on the first of these "fallacies." Public officials do receive more in compensation than the dollars they are paid. They are compensated, too, in prestige

and in the satisfaction that they are serving the public welfare. And I must regretfully agree that our democracy does compensate its most efficient public employees by shortsightedly training all too many for jobs elsewhere. If some public employees do start in government at salaries in excess of what they previously earned, it is still true that many of the most capable eventually leave because they can earn more elsewhere!

Government is big business. It is important business also. It requires just as efficient men and women to man the Bureau of Internal Revenue as to operate Macy's Department Store. It is folly to say that the public service does not lose when able officials leave. Government will never compete with private business on the dollars paid for like service. It does not have to. The man who derives some satisfaction from knowing he is serving the public welfare will remain in public service even when he could earn ten per cent or twenty per cent more in private business, but government loses many of its competent public employees in the professional and administrative ranks of the civil service now because they can earn fifty per cent or more elsewhere. To lose thousands of this type of public servant each year (not just the headliners of the *LaGuardia* type) is, in the vernacular, "a hell-uva way to run a railroad."

JOHN J. CORSON

Washington, D. C.

DENAZIFICATION OF GERMANY

SIR: . . . Mr. Robinson ["Why Denazification Is Lagging," *AMERICAN MERCURY*, May 1946] has not clearly developed the chronological evolution of our denazification policy. While from the very beginning of 1945, the objectives of our denazification policy have not changed, the emphasis in its execution prior to termination of hostilities was necessarily slightly different from that which controlled our procedures after V-E Day when occupation was an accomplished fact. . . .

During hostilities when every decision made was arrived at only after consideration had been given to its effect on military operations, it was

only natural that the application of our denazification policy was subordinated to the necessities of combat. Purely military considerations, therefore, led SHAEF to issue a directive permitting the continued employment of Nazis in important positions, if such employment was necessary to a continuation of civilian services required by our combat troops and supporting echelons. However, the U. S. military commanders narrowed such exceptions down to those which had to be made because of "military necessity" and specifically prohibited the retention of Nazis for mere "administrative convenience." Even then Nazis were removed unless it was first determined that their continued employment created no threat to the security of our forces. . . .

Shortly after surrender, General Henry Parkman, Jr., then the G-5 of 6th Army Group, made the inspection referred to in part two of Mr. Robinson's article accompanied by Col. Cain and a number of other officers. This party, operating in three groups, visited every military government detachment in the U. S. Zone, reporting in detail upon each one. Their reports, while not justifying Mr. Robinson's statement that "virtually none of the detachments had even begun to eliminate Nazis from governmental and industrial posts," showed that progress in denazification was spotty. . . . However, considering that this inspection was made . . . scarcely 30 days after surrender . . . the results observed were such as could have been anticipated.

On the basis of these reports, action was taken at every echelon which resulted in the strengthening of denazification procedures, coordination of the activities of various interested branches and the establishment, finally, of a denazification review board at Headquarters, U. S. Forces, European Theater.

. . . It is appropriate to refer to the original denazification directives issued in the early spring of 1945 by 12th and 6th Army Groups. . . . These two army groups working together published similar directives, setting up certain rules of thumb tests based upon membership in various Nazi party formations and organizations, including those which were supervised by or affiliated with the Nazi party, as a means of determining which Germans should be barred from office or from private positions as Nazis. It was known that almost every individual in Germany, willingly or unwillingly, was a member of at least one organization which could be classified as "Nazi." . . . Decisions therefore . . . had to be made on an

arbitrary basis. The unsatisfactory nature of this type of test was appreciated by those who prepared the directive.

. . . in an attempt to provide some measure of flexibility, Headquarters, USFET, organized the board referred to by Mr. Robinson, page 568 of his article, under Lieutenant Colonel Elliott as president. This board, in reviewing cases, employed the following categories previously established by Special Branch (the branch of the Public Safety Division of Military Government which was responsible for denazification): (1) Non-employment Mandatory; (2) Employment Discretionary — Adverse Recommendation; (3) Employment Discretionary no Adverse Recommendation; (4) No Evidence of Nazi Activity; (5) Evidence of Anti-Nazi Activity.

Depending upon his organizational membership, every new applicant for a position and every person who desired to be retained in the position he held prior to occupation, was assigned to one of these categories, on the basis of a questionnaire and investigation. Whenever any officer in the field desired to appoint or retain an individual who fell within either of the first two categories, an application had to be made to this board and evidence furnished substantiating the reason why the appointment or retention should be permitted. The only exceptions that were made in cases falling within the first category were in those cases where it affirmatively appeared that the individual involved had shown such anti-Nazi activities or attitudes as would overcome the presumption created by his membership in the prescribed organizations. Permission to appoint or retain persons falling in the second category was only granted when it could be shown that there was no evidence indicating he actively participated in party activities. In any case it had to appear that his retention or appointment was absolutely necessary, and then the granting of permission was conditioned upon his being discharged whenever a suitable acceptable substitute could be found.

Under these directives, Military Government Officers had received up to 31 December 1945, 1,019,000 *Fragebogen*s (personnel questionnaires) a number which is equal to approximately 8 per cent of the population of the occupied zone. Of this number 78 per cent had by then been investigated and processed. By the end of January 1946, 1,250,000 *Fragebogen*s had been received of which 86 per cent had been processed. Of this total 190,000 or 18 per cent were found to be in the Non-employment Mandatory Category and 79,000 or 7 per cent were in the Employment

Discretionary — Adverse Recommendation category. By 28 February 1946 the number of *Fragebogen* received was 1,345,000 of which 89 per cent had been processed. At that time 17 per cent of the total were the Non-Employment Mandatory category and 7 per cent in the Employment Discretionary — Adverse Recommendation category. Of the public employees vetted, 23 per cent were found to be in the Non-Employment Mandatory category. Less than one-half of 1 per cent of all applicants for employment in public office and business and industry who were found to be in the Non-employment Mandatory category were then employed. Only 9 per cent of those falling in the second category remained. . . .

As far as judicial officials were concerned, what amounted to a fresh start was made. As soon as our troops entered a German town, all German courts were closed and judges, notaries and attorneys were automatically suspended. Before the courts were opened, those who were proposed for judicial or administrative offices were screened with the greatest of care and only those whose history definitely established that they were outright anti-Nazi or, at worst, passive members of the party or its affiliated organizations who had received no preferment attributable to party activity were cleared for appointment. . . .

The execution of our denazification program has been relentless in the sense that it has penalized large numbers of people for membership in party organizations who, in fact, were probably no worse than large numbers of their neighbors who were either never able to obtain or who for personal reasons avoided membership in the groups or societies mentioned. The dilemma which has faced Military Government from the start in administering its program has been that only a small percentage of Germans can be honestly said to be anti-Nazi and that this minority is too small to use as an exclusive source of governmental personnel. The fact is that we are governing a country permeated with Nazism and in choosing those who must do the necessary work of government and industry we can only hope to select the least fanatical of the available material.

As a matter of fact, the top men in the German civil administration, and most of their associates are known anti-Nazis. Men such as President Hoegner of Bavaria and President Maier of Baden-Wuerttemberg have made every effort to support our policies.

Under Law Number 8, which was promulgated by Headquarters, USFET, on 26 September 1945 at the direction of General Clay, it is anticipated that the activities of our forces together with

those of the German authorities appointed to enforce the Law for National Liberation adopted by the Minister Presidents of each of the three German *Laender* in our Zone, will result in the elimination of Nazi influence from business and industry in the U. S. Zone, Germany. . . .

As is to be expected in any large scale operation, mistakes have been made in the carrying out of our denazification program but it can confidently be asserted that this mission has been vigorously prosecuted since the cessation of hostilities and that tremendous progress has been made in breaking the grip of Nazism on German civil administration, business and industry within a period of less than a year following Germany's unconditional surrender. . . .

JAMES R. PIERCE
Colonel, G.S.C.
Deputy Director

*Bureau of Public Relations
War Department
Washington, D. C.*

SIR: Col. Pierce's survey of the denazification drive in the U. S. Zone of Germany is a keen and an honest one. I have no quarrel with it nor do I believe that there is any substantial conflict between his report and mine. . . . He says in essence, "Look how far we've progressed. . . ." I tried to say, "Look how far we still have to go."

To my mind, there is no doubt that the U. S. Military Government under General Clay has done a far better denazification job than any of the other three occupying powers. Once top-echelon muddling was eliminated, the Army was finally able to make real inroads into the problem.

It is true — and here alone I must differ with Col. Pierce's interpretation — that in the early days of the occupation, we Americans stumbled badly. Although some good directives were eventually issued, their application in the field was often sabotaged by the indifference and the hostility of many officers. No sophistic references to "military considerations" can excuse the repeated instances of the retention of Nazis solely for expediency. The phrase "military necessity" was so badly abused that it actually became a laughing stock. The case I noted of the Cologne water engineer who was fired as a Nazi but then rehired — with the same duties — as a "common laborer" was typical. Many other examples can be cited, such as the bank president in a town on the Bavarian border who was ousted as a Nazi. Control of the bank was then vested in his daughter. . . .

Furthermore, the investigation of the Parkman-Cain Board — which continued through the summer of 1945 (not ending in June, as Col. Pierce suggests) — showed that up to that time the denazification program had produced but negligible results.

It is also interesting to note that as late as January 31, 1946, 6700 Nazis held key railroad posts, that the report of the Office of Military Government for January 1946 stated openly that Law No. 8 was being enforced laxly, that it was not until March 8 that Dr. Albert Rehm, the pro-Nazi director of the University of Munich, was ousted, and that, even so, at the end of April, the faculty of that institution was still teaching Hitlerian theories of race and heredity, that a Nazi underground movement is reported to be in existence and growing today.

These matters are important, of course, but I am in complete accord with Col. Pierce when he says that progress has been made in breaking the grip of Nazism. I only regret that the progress has not been greater.

The obstacles to denazification which he mentions — the difficulty of determining who is a Nazi — the fact that the entire German nation is permeated with Nazism — are all too real. There is one obstacle he does not enumerate. That is the tragic apathy of the American people to the vital necessity of denazification, of the vast importance of the job being done and still to be done. . . .

DONALD B. ROBINSON

New York City.

BREAD AND BUTTER LEARNING

SIR: Hats off to Prof. Lyle Owen for his article on types of college students ["The Low State of Higher Learning," AMERICAN MERCURY, August 1946]. . . . the sad part about this latest crowding into colleges is that so many desirable students will not be able to enter, and I understand especially will this be true in the women's colleges. Judging from the articles written today far too few people have taken the trouble to ascertain the motives causing this rush to college. Is it a desire for a more enriched life, or is it largely the "loaves and fishes" attitude that is causing this flocking to college? If we are to judge from the conversations of most of the returned veterans, the chief impelling motive for going to college is to increase the earning capacity of the student. But many will be disappointed later in life if their reason for going to college is largely materialistic, for the simple reason that there will not be enough executive positions. To judge from the courses which the majority of students are

now selecting, culture means less and less. . . . What most seem to want is a "bread and butter" education, and so the students flock into the courses that seem to allow them in the shortest possible time to get out into the mad scramble for the dollar. . . .

When we place a cash value on graduation from college, our philosophy of the greatest good for the greatest possible number means nothing more than that each shall strive to get ahead and rise out of his class, having small regard for what shall happen to society as a whole. Of course, when the Liberal Arts Colleges sent out drummers to round up prospective students and showed all such by graphs that the college graduate earned more money than the non-college graduate, why blame students for taking a materialistic attitude towards education? . . .

College heads are always bemoaning the fact that they have such low types of students but each year the standards are lowered, and especially will this now be true since Uncle Sam will pay the bills. . . .

THOMAS W. SERVISS

Santa Paula, Calif.

ELBERT HUBBARD

SIR: In Charles Hanson Towne's article entitled "The One-Man Magazines" in the July [1946] MERCURY I notice he states that Elbert Hubbard lost his life on the *Titanic*. Perhaps he is confusing Elbert Hubbard's death with an essay Hubbard once wrote about the sinking of the *Titanic*. If my memory serves me right, Hubbard met his demise on the *Lusitania*.

Mr. Towne fails to mention the fact that Charles J. Finger for a time edited *Reedy's Mirror* and later wrote and published for many years one of America's outstanding one-man magazines, *All's Well*.

LOYD EMERSON SIBERELL

Chicago, Ill.

COLLEGES vs. HIGH SCHOOLS

SIR: The shocking inadequacy of American education with its confusion and contradictions is justly reflected in Mr. Steigman's article, "What Ails Our High Schools?", in the May 1946 AMERICAN MERCURY. The emphasis and interpretation which he gives to the question are, however, open to much discussion.

The colleges, whatever their shortcomings, can by no stretch of the imagination be held responsible for the dilemma of present-day education. To be sure, they may be censured in that they have for the most part played no very enterpris-

ing rôle in shaping current policy. But a more equitable analysis would indicate rather that they are the victims of a seriously perverted philosophy of education. The existing entrance requirements are no more an impediment to a progressive and democratic program than they are a real aid to the maintenance of sound and high standards in the academic world. In actual fact the colleges have already reduced substantially their entrance demands and such requirements as remain represent little more than a pusillanimous gesture to retain some integrity. . . .

The root of the trouble lies, as is implicit in the article, in the false democratization of education in which we have increasingly indulged in the past twenty-five years. Even a cursory examination of the syllabi of elementary and secondary schools reveals the extensive dilutions to which the programs have been subjected. In response to the insistent demands by parents that more and more students be awarded a diploma, all types of trifling and extraneous material have been introduced into the curricula, and the content of established courses has at the same time been drastically cut to enable all and sundry to graduate. The results, as Mr. Steigman points out, have been deleterious to an extreme. . . . That the colleges have trailed ineffectually in the wake of the movement is indisputable, but their tottering entrance requirements are but the vestigial remains of a sterner day.

No pat solution can be proffered, but certain beneficial changes recommend themselves. A definite cleavage should be made between those gifted and serious students whose ultimate goal is the university — no matter how high its requirements may be — and the others who are being shepherded through the awkward years of adolescence and desire little more than to be well-adjusted, gregarious people, able to read the newspapers and do simple sums. For these latter the bugaboo of the trade schools should be dissipated, and the rôle of the artisan, the mechanic and the domestic science major be restored to the dignity and esteem which they merit.

The curriculum, as Mr. Steigman rightly suggests, needs complete overhauling. . . . it has become abundantly apparent that today the student needs greater familiarity with the broadening world of science, with geography, economics and history, and particularly a competent grasp of the English language. . . .

The much maligned studies of mathematics and foreign languages do require a new approach which the recently successful Army methods may doubtless abet. . . .

As for music, art and physical education it is highly questionable whether it is the business of general education to do more than indicate the possibilities of these fields to students at large, and offer elementary instruction to such as may desire it. . . . The besetting sin of today's school is, that in catering to all manner of hobbies and whims, it has grievously neglected the fundamentals. Therein lies most of our educational illness, and not in the small hurdles that the colleges have left standing for their applicants.

GIFFORD P. ORWEN

Rochester, N. Y.

SIR: The article "What Ails Our High Schools?" is of great interest to me, not specifically because of what the author implies in that title, but because he has again brought to the public attention the usual arguments of the adherents of the bogie of college-dominated high-school curricula. For the most part the followers of this doctrine are found among superintendents of schools, high-school principals and professors of education.

I do not doubt Mr. Steigman's sincerity for the reform of secondary education; I merely state that the inclusion of several facts would have lessened the validity of his conclusions, which are made on the basis of inappropriate and inadequate evidence. For example, take the statement, "over 80 per cent of our boys and girls do reach the high school level, but half of these drop out before the senior year; and the heaviest mortality occurs among the freshmen." The conclusion that pupils are unable to adjust themselves to the prevalent high-school curriculum which is unsuited to them, disregards the necessity of discovering how or why pupils with academic handicaps ever reached the high school. Mr. Steigman makes no reference at all to one cause of the failures — the employment of too many teachers who are required to teach subjects which they themselves have never studied, and who are themselves products of the more or less haphazard system in which they are employed. In so doing, he fails to take into consideration one important fact: that through improved preparation of teachers and more competent instruction a far larger number of pupils might succeed in and profit from the study of academic subjects.

It is with the statements concerning the conventional subjects, particularly foreign languages, that one may quarrel. In one paragraph of the article occurs this sentence: "Once they have accumulated the proper number of units in a foreign language, our students are never likely to make use of it. They never really learn to

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(Continued from page 508)

Language?" [AMERICAN MERCURY, July 1946].
More is the pity that throughout the writer committed a grievous error and a great injustice.

Mr. Johnson once or twice mentions the trio, Grimm, Rask and Ihre; thereupon he proceeds to give Grimm the main credit for the great work which laid the foundation for philology. . . . But all authorities state that Rasmus Christian Rask of Denmark was first to discover those very principles. . . . Thus on Rask's broad and deep foundation — rather more than foundation, in fact — did Jakob Grimm build.

Honor to whom honor!

GERTRUDE B. LONGBRAKE

Seattle, Wash.

SIR: Rask deserves a salute such as Miss Longbrake has given. Bopp, Verner, and many other philologists likewise deserve credit for their additions to our understanding of the Indo-European complex of languages. In fact, so many scholars have contributed to this theory that credit could not be prorated among them in an article primarily designed to explain this theory to the layman. . . .

FALK JOHNSON

Evanston, Ill.

STRIKES AND THE PUBLIC

SIR: Mr. Louis Waldman, distinguished labor lawyer, makes a good case against compulsory arbitration in his article, "Can Courts Rule Labor?" [AMERICAN MERCURY, July 1946]. Nothing is more remote from my wishes, as a layman, than to take issue with Mr. Waldman, yet he, like so many who discuss the problems of labor-management relations especially from the labor side, seems to omit one entire step. . . .

In his discussion he uses three types of contract: marriage, business and labor. In regard to labor contracts he argues that there is no fundamental difference between the individual and the collective bargain.

Legally that may be true, but practically there is a vital difference, which I see as a member of the consuming public with no bias toward either management or labor. When William Foley and the General Motors Corporation fail to agree on the wages and hours of Foley's employment, Foley can, without question, cease to work. The General Motors, however, can replace Foley and continue its operations.

When Foley joins with all the rest of the employees of General Motors the situation is altered completely. If there is a disagreement about wages and hours, the employees still have the right to stop working, but they also insist on the right

to prevent the employment of substitutes. This brings hardship upon the general public, especially when the dispute lies in the field of fuel, power, transportation, or food. . . .

Moreover, Mr. Waldman also says, "Employer-employee relations, we know, are a matter of contract." That is theoretically so, but what a time legislators have with labor opposition whenever a law is proposed to force labor's responsibility for maintaining such contracts.

Many generations of labor in this country were inexcusably abused without question. No one can criticize the workers for their determination to win higher wages and better working conditions and hours.

Labor, however, at this time enjoys privileges that should be properly valued. Labor can harm no one so much as its own members by failing to recognize its responsibilities to the public. As strong numerically as it is, labor is still a minority group. Its greatest good will come from cooperation, its greatest harm from any arrogant attempt to rule.

DWIGHT W. JENNINGS

Westport, Conn.

SIR: . . . the workers do not have or assert the right to prevent the employment of substitutes. What they do insist on is the right to picket, that is, to apprise the public as consumers and the workers likely to replace them as "substitutes" that an industrial dispute is in progress. They ask the prospective "substitutes" to sympathize with the strikers by not taking their jobs and ask the public to withhold its consumers' dollars from an employer unfair to labor.

The picket line and the strike is as strong as the public opinion that backs it. Strikes called for an unjust reason and in clear defiance of the public interest will fail for lack of public support. . . .

Where strikers attempt to prevent the employment of substitutes by anything but peaceful picketing they are violating the law which today amply covers such situations. And the courts, of course, have jurisdiction to hold labor leaders and workers responsible for their acts. Labor does not object to being held responsible under the law on the same basis as all other people. It objects to being singled out for discriminatory treatment.

Undoubtedly some of the questions raised by Mr. Jennings need study and analysis in the light of 1946 conditions. That is the reason why I suggest in my seven point program that Congress or the President name a Labor Industry Commission to study those problems and report back to Congress and to the nation.

LOUIS WALDMAN

New York City.



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